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**A historical geography of educational power
Comparing fields and circuits of education in Sheffield and London**

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A historical geography of
educational power:

Comparing fields and circuits of
education in Sheffield and
London

Sol Gamsu

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in
Geography at King's College London.
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Abstract

The driving question behind this thesis is how regional divisions within England are present in patterns of social reproduction through schooling and how this interacts with and shapes differentiated institutional hierarchies. Specifically, this focuses on disentangling London-specific middle-class and elite circuits of education from broader national socio-spatial patterns of social reproduction through the school system. This draws on, but ultimately moves beyond, earlier debates around whether the circuits of schooling (Ball et al., 1995) associated with inner London gentrifiers (Butler and Robson, 2003c; Ball et al., 2004; Butler and Hamnett, 2011) are specific to the capital or whether there are provincial parallels (Savage et al., 2005; Bridge, 2006a; 2007). A mixed methods approach is taken, combining interviews/focus groups with post-16 students and teachers across several schools and colleges in London and Sheffield with social network analysis and geographical analysis of various educational datasets. There are three central findings, firstly that London's 'super-state' schools form part of a 'new urban elitism' in education which is largely distinctive to London and some of the more affluent towns and cities of the South-East. Second, drawing on an analysis of regional trends in private schooling since the 2008-09 crisis, as well as data on catchment-area housing costs and the role of ethnic minority suburbanisation at an elite suburban grammar school, I reveal new lines of regional division in middle-class identities and orientations to subtly different institutional hierarchies. Finally, I show how stable middle-class enclaves around particular primary and secondary schools, traditionally in suburban areas but increasingly in central areas in London too, form a national pattern with an associated set of local, middle-class 'continuity' circuits. These regional divisions are in some ways a continuation of old arguments and debates around the dualism of class relations and structures in England and the UK more broadly (Rubinstein, 1987a; Cain and Hopkins, 1987; Martin, 1988), and how this affects and is affected by an education system with clear regional biases (Bradford and Burdett, 1990; Hoare, 1991). However, it also suggests new fracture lines and divisions commensurate with new approaches and analyses of the geography of social class in the twenty first century (Savage, 2015b; Wakeling and Savage, 2015a).

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For my dad who was a constant presence and a constant absence while I wrote this.

Simon Pickvance 9.4.1949-23.11.2012

Mourn for the dead and fight like hell for the living.

1. Introduction

The growth of London's economic power within the UK and its role as a centre for elites has become increasingly apparent since the 2007-8 global financial crisis. Against this backdrop, there has been a resurgent interest in elites internationally (Piketty, 2014), with a particular focus on elite education (Khan, 2011; Van Zanten et al., 2015). Research in the UK has also examined elite education and how the elites themselves fit into a changing class structure (Savage, 2015b), but one in which the 'golden triangle' of Oxbridge and London universities remain the key institutional pathways to the elite (Wakeling and Savage, 2015b). Within this analysis of elite education, less attention has been paid to the 'material' underpinnings of elite schooling (Ball, 2015: 237), and within the UK there has been little attention paid to how elite schooling is also underpinned by a geography of class and cultural and economic power. This thesis is a contribution towards a historical geography of educational power which seeks to understand the contemporary geography of the field of elite and middle-class schooling in England as the outcome of persistent historical patterns as well as more recent structural changes in economic organization. In arguing for a historical analysis of contemporary educational *power*, I draw on Bourdieu's (1996: 5) argument that 'the sociology of education is a chapter, and not a minor one at that, in the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of power, not to mention the sociology of philosophies of power.' The focus here is to extend a sociological analysis of educational power, making it explicitly spatial and historical, with the former emphasis being present but not central to Bourdieu's analysis of elite education.

A key element of this approach is to examine how middle-class and elite schooling¹ is experienced and structured differently in London and the rest of the South-East (ROSE) compared to smaller provincial cities. My approach here involves combining two bodies of literature, merging together the 'structural history' (Bourdieu, 1996: 188-219), of elite and middle-class schooling in England (Banks, 1955; Honey, 1977; Rubinstein, 1986), with

¹ Drawing on Kenway and Koh (2013: 18) I understand an elite school to be one associated with high-attainment, exclusiveness – generally, but not only, through high fees, with an association of winning places at elite universities. Within a UK context, this latter criteria has been used previously as the measure of a school's status, with winning places at Oxford or Cambridge seen as a clear indication of prestige and symbolic capital for the school involved, a marker which goes back to the late 19th century as Steedman (1987) argued. It is this criteria that I primarily use over the course of the thesis as a proxy for distinguishing elite schools and the various distinctions within the broader field of elite and middle-class schooling. Elite schools are of course associated with being socially exclusive but, in a UK context at least, the distinction between schools dominated by the elite and/or the middle classes is perhaps less clear. I discuss the analytical case for using this phrase in greater depth in Appendix I (p. 291).

contemporary analyses of urban schooling and the middle classes (Ball et al., 1995; Butler and Robson, 2003a; Butler and Hamnett, 2011). In the latter field of research, one central question has been whether gentrifiers in provincial cities tend to revert to 'conventional' strategies of moving to the suburbs for secondary school (Bridge, 2006a), whereas in inner London gentrifiers have a broader range of options available, constituting a 'metropolitan habitus' of school choice (Butler and Robson, 2003a). This thesis examines this question from a new position, by framing the contemporary experience of post-16 students in schools in Sheffield and North London through a spatial reading of the history of education and the history of middle-class practices in schooling. A historical urban and regional geography has been largely absent in renewed traditions of the geographies of education (Butler and Hamnett, 2007; Holloway et al., 2010; Holloway et al., 2011). Similarly recent geographies of elite schooling have largely taken a transnational emphasis (Koh and Kenway, 2016) rather than looking at how the geography of schools at a national, regional and local urban scale is woven into particular histories of education and local and regional patterns of class formation. This involves thinking about how a spatial analysis of education can combine and extend traditions within urban history (Dyos, 1971; 1973; Marsden, 1987), debates within economic geography (Cooke, 1985; Massey, 1995; Parker and Harloe, 2015) and in broader histories of England's political economy (Rubinstein, 1987a; Martin, 1988; Cain and Hopkins, 2002). Through a spatial reading of the history of education, I examine how current trends are further concentrating the historical nexus of elite and middle-class schooling in England on London and the South-East, widening the gap with middle-class educational practices outside the South-East.

Private education at the 'public' schools predominantly concentrated in the South-East of England² has long been the key conduit to study at Oxford or Cambridge and an elite career across a range of fields. However, within London itself, the past three decades have seen

² The geography of elite private schooling has always had a south-eastern skew, as is evident in the maps of Oxbridge participation in 1867 (See Figure 29, p. 255) with most schools concentrated in London and the surrounding Home Counties. However, they were also a phenomenon of the South of England more broadly and this remains the case. Private school participation in the South-West and the East of England is still above the national average significantly higher than the midlands and northern regions but lower than in London and the South-East (Figure 15, p. 100). North of the line between the Severn and the Wash, there are also fewer private schools sending large numbers of students to Oxbridge (See Appendix E). The public schools combined with Oxbridge have long been the source of a 'national' elite culture, but this was, and I would argue remains, associated with the elite and wealthier (in both economic and cultural terms) fractions of the middle class who have long been concentrated on London and the South-East of England (I elaborate on this in appendix F). This has meant that despite its national intentions, it has always been institutionally stronger and better-represented in the South, and particularly in the South-East. Outside the south-eastern nexus of elite schools and universities, their northern counterparts in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cumbria and the North-East are relatively isolated outposts.

the rise of a group of elite, 'super-state' schools which now compete with the elite private schools for places at Oxbridge and the London universities. Media attention on these elite 'super-state' schools (Herrmann, 2014; Rose, 2014) has come at a time when even the professional middle classes are 'struggling' to afford private education, with fees having risen far faster than inflation for the past 25 years (Centre for Economic and Business Research, 2014; 2015). This research will seek to examine the historical trajectory of these elite state schools as well as the circuits of education, the collective patterns of individual trajectories through these neighbourhoods and schools, which are associated with them. Underpinning the rise of these schools are urban processes that are combining with changes in the school system in ways which are not paralleled in smaller provincial cities. Ethnic-minority suburbanization and the rise in house prices associated with gentrification are both contributing to the rise of these schools in ways which are specific to London. However, outside the South-East, middle-class social reproduction³ has also been changing, with falling numbers in private schools since the crisis leading to a spate of closures, mergers and, most interestingly, free school conversion. The latter constitutes a historical pattern with other regressive policy moves, specifically the assisted places scheme, which have tended to bolster elite forms of schooling at times of economic weakness. Examining this trend in the context of data showing substantial differences in private school intake between the South-East, where numbers remain stable if not buoyant, and the rest of the country, I argue this further contributes to the resurgence of an old dualism within elite education (Rubinstein, 1977a: 620-621; 1986: 199-200), with Oxbridge and the public schools increasingly dominated by the south-eastern elite and middle classes.⁴

³ Social reproduction throughout this thesis is taken to stand for the role of schooling in reproducing class relations and more specifically how education tends to reproduce middle-class status and particular forms of culture across generations. The concept of reproduction has multiple meanings (Willis, 1981), but it is the Bourdieusian understanding of the reproduction of class position and capitals (cultural, economic and social) through the education system which is referred to here (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970; Willis, 1981).

⁴ The theoretical understanding of class I adopt is one which acknowledges the need for a subtle approach to class fractions *within* the middle class in relation to education (Savage et al., 1995: 150-154; Power et al., 1998; Power and Whitty, 2002). Furthermore, it aims to extend analysis which first began to highlight distinctions between how middle-class gentrifiers in London as opposed to provincial cities respond to very different local geographies and local systems of education (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Bridge, 2006a). The findings of the Great British Class Survey (GBCS) (Savage et al., 2013; Savage, 2015b) further underline the need for a more subtle approach in understanding contemporary class structures and the micro-geography of the elite class highlighted by the GBCS (Cunningham and Savage, 2015) is referred to directly in relation to my case studies of London schools in chapter four. Indeed this elite micro-geography suggests that the specificity of elite schooling in the capital is underpinned by the distinctive patterns of elite and middle-class formation occurring there. This point is central to the historical argument which is made within the thesis about the importance of middle-class dualisms between London and the South-East more broadly and the rest of the country were and remain central to creating a distinctive constellation of elite private and 'super-state' schools in and around London. My case studies of London 'super-state' schools in chapter five and provincial suburban comprehensives focus on distinctive middle-class fractions, with

This thesis then, sets out to examine three key issues which form the basis of the three empirical chapters. In chapter four, I begin my empirical analysis by mapping the institutional field of elite schooling, in a Bourdieusian sense (Bourdieu and De Saint Martin, 1996), using spatial and social network techniques to examine the structure of the field both nationally and within London and my provincial case study, Sheffield. Sheffield provides a clear provincial contrast as a city with a much smaller private sector, no grammar school and a highly polarised divide between the suburban South-West of the city and the more working-class and ethnically mixed North and East.⁵ This chapter also examines the key historical and contemporary role of private schools within the field of elite schooling, focusing in particular the regional geography of private schooling since the 2007-08 crisis. A regional lens is also used to examine the geography of Oxbridge acceptances and I combine these data to examine the evidence for the continuity of a dualism in how the middle classes in the South-East of England and those in the rest of the country, and particularly the North of England,⁶ use the education system as Rubinstein (1986) suggested. In chapter five the focus shifts to examine case studies of a number of elite, 'super-state' schools in London focussing on elite Outer London grammars tied into processes of ethnic-minority suburbanisation and inner London comprehensives in gentrified neighbourhoods. I draw on fieldwork and interviews with ex- and current students as well as interviews with teachers and local stakeholders and historical material on the schools. These schools compete (on attainment and Oxbridge places), and maintain ties, with the elite private sector in a way which is simply not present in schools in Sheffield. In the final empirical chapter (chapter six) I examine how middle-class practices of colonising sought-after suburban state comprehensive schools in Sheffield and London constitute a national pattern of the middle classes and one which is in some ways being replicated by inner London gentrifiers who are also creating 'enclaves' around particular sets of schools (Butler and Robson, 2003c; Atkinson, 2006). However, the residential practice of buying into a catchment area of one of these schools now poses very significant financial questions for traditional middle-class

ethnicity being a key factor in the case of the former and propensity for spatial mobility on entry to university suggested further distinctions within the middle-class in Sheffield. I justify my approach to conceptualising and operationalising social class over this thesis in greater depth in Appendix I (p. 295).

⁵ Previous work that has examined middle-class educational practices has been in cities with, relative to other provincial cities, large private sectors, as is the case in Bristol (Bridge, 2006a), or in cities or conurbations which retain grammar school systems (Savage et al., 2005). I discuss middle-class and elite social reproduction through schooling in a range of other provincial cities in the methodology section (chapter 3).

⁶ I use the standard Government Office Region definitions of English regions. The North of England is understood as Yorkshire and the Humber, the North-West, Cumbria and the North-East.

professionals in London unlike in Sheffield. These three chapters, taken as a whole, also provide an indication of how the middle class, from its lower fringes to its upper quasi-elite fractions, is changing within England in ways which contribute to contemporary debates on shifting class structures in the UK (Savage, 2015b).

The argument also contributes to and develops the extensive literature on middle-class patterns of school choice, understood more broadly here as circuits of education (Ball et al., 1995; Butler and Robson, 2003c). Ball *et al.*'s seminal article described how classed processes of school choice had a distinct geography, with the capacity, or not, to overcome spatial barriers of catchment areas and long commutes to school varying by social class. Whilst working-class parents in the London case-study area opted to stay local, middle-class parents were able to negotiate the 'frictions of space' to gain access to sought-after state comprehensives. The result was four distinctive 'circuits of schooling' (described in-depth on p. 16), of which this thesis examines just two, the cosmopolitan elite comprehensives and selective grammars on the one hand, and the independent day school circuits on the other. As my research focusses primarily on the post-16 to university transition, I refer instead to circuits of *education*, but the concept still refers to same process of gendered, classed and ethnic patterns of individual trajectories forming collective patterns running through the education system and across geographical space. My approach to examining these circuits is historical, examining how and why these institutions and the classed and ethnic circuits to them developed over the past 20 to 30 years, showing how, since the original paper, these state and private schools have grown closer together. London's 'super-state' (as I term them) and independent schools effectively now operate within the same dominant sub-field when it comes to accessing elite universities. These institutional positions within the field⁷ are also visualised along with the circuits of education connecting particular schools to certain universities in a novel Bourdieusian approach to the use of social network methods. In combining the Bourdieusian concept of field in understanding institutional hierarchies at the post-16 educational phase, I develop and build on Bourdieu's concept, pulling in Massey's conception of the layering of regional development to provide a historical, regional lens on how hierarchies of elite schools are produced (See section 2.3 and 2.4 below). My historical analysis is however, not merely limited to the analysis of recent history but attempts to trace how individual case study schools accumulate forms of symbolic, economic and cultural capital over decades, if not centuries, in the case of certain schools. A long-term historical analysis of the geographies of middle-class social reproduction at the local,

⁷ Bourdieu's conception of field is used here and will be explained in section 2.3 below.

neighbourhood scale reveals the strong urban history of middle-class enclaves with sought-after schools central to these communities. Moreover, it also applies at the regional scale with the elite state schools now present in London absent from most provincial cities, particularly in the North of England, thus entrenching historical regional divisions in elite education and patterns of educational social reproduction in England.

The literature which has used the concept of circuits of education has also largely neglected the post-16 phase of education, having previously concentrated on the pre-school and primary to secondary phases (Vincent et al., 2004; McDowell et al., 2006; Ball and Vincent, 2007; Smith and Higley, 2012). Relatively little work has analysed the social and urban geography of post-16 choice or higher education (HE) choice and researchers working with this focus have tended to use alternative approaches and conceptualisations of collective patterns of student trajectories (Watson and Church, 2009; Singleton, 2010). The importance of this phase of education has become increasingly important in a 'post-tripartite' era in which rising participation in education has seen processes of selection shifted 'upwards' to entry to particular post-16 institutions and tracks as well as to universities. Forms of selection at 16 or 18 now work together to ensure socio-economic inequalities in access to education have been effectively maintained despite comprehensive reform (Heath and Jacobs, 1999; Boliver, 2011b).

Situating contemporary educational inequalities historically is central to this thesis. One of the key elements in how structural inequalities have persisted is through the continuing influence of the curriculum and culture of schools dominated by the middle classes and certain elite class fractions. That is not to say that this curriculum or the institutions involved have not changed, but curriculum reform has tended to happen in ways which preserved the dominance of elite and middle-class schools established in the late 19th and early 20th century and this remained true after the expansion of secondary schooling in 1945. After comprehensive reform, the post-16 phase in particular became the site of preservation of academic selection and an elite-oriented academic culture, which has proven highly resistant to attempts to reform it progressively (Rhoades, 1987; Reid and Filby, 1982; Hodgson and Spours, 2006; Harland, 1988). One of the elite 'super-state' schools examined here reveals the continuing influence of 'gentlemanly' cultural values. This effect of 'regressive modernisation' in Stuart Hall's (1987: 17-19) terms, with education reform reproducing and preserving old forms of institutional hierarchy and elite educational culture will be a key

theme running through this thesis. The conservative, regressive logic of the educational state in England in recent years will be examined spatially here. Both the rise of London's super-state schools and the conversion of provincial private schools into free schools will be examined within a broader historical geography of educational power.

The role of elite educational institutions of the South-East of England have long been inseparable from the English/British State as (Joyce, 2013) recognises in reference to Eton's proximity to Windsor the old royal residence. What is attempted here is a broader examination of the role of education within this regional divide between London and the South-East, with the capital's wealth having been central to funding and structuring schooling across the country from the very foundations of the English state in the 16th century (Jordan, 1974). It uses arguments referring to the historical dualism in wealth between the elite and middle class of the late 19th century to provide a lens for exploring the contemporary regional geography of elite schooling. Furthermore and particularly in the case of Sheffield, the rationale for the choice of which will be discussed in chapter 3, I discuss how the residential divisions of an industrial city have structured and continue to structure the city's politics of education and remain key to understanding the hierarchy of post-16 across the city. Examining contemporary circuits of education across different neighbourhoods and cities and the position of particular schools and colleges within local and national fields of education at the point of HE transition is situated within a historical analysis at the neighbourhood, city and regional scales. This is what is meant by a historical geography of educational power, which could just as easily be termed a spatial historical sociology of educational power⁸ - developing this approach is the central theoretical and empirical contribution made by this thesis.

⁸ I prefer the phrase 'a historical geography of educational power' mainly because it sets greater emphasis on the role of place and space as being constitutive of particular institutional forms of schooling and patterns of class formation. Whilst spatial analysis in sociology is often not explicit or central to the discipline, I am sceptical of claims of the need to 'spatialize' the sociology of education (Robertson, 2009). The early work of post-war sociology included an analysis of how cities shaped schooling (Glass, 1948; Campbell, 1956; Pahl, 1963) and how traversing socio-spatial boundaries was key to determining educational experience (Eden, 1959). If we go further back, and I am not the first to make this point (Marsden, 1977: 23-24), to the founding surveys of social scientific analysis in the late 19th and early 20th century (Booth, 1892; Lindsay, 1926; Smith, 1930), or to the government commissions on education in the 1860s (Clarendon Commission, 1864a; Fearon, 1868; Bryce, 1868) concern for the spatial distribution of middle-class secondary schooling is a major factor. Contemporary *theories* of space and place have much to offer the sociology of education, but the sociology of education has not lacked for a spatial or urban lens on education even if these topics have not been as central to the sub-discipline as they might have been. My agnosticism about the specificity of a historical geography or a 'spatial' historical sociology of educational power draws on

Chapter 2 sets out to provide the theoretical basis for this approach. It combines an argument for the theoretical framework adopted in this thesis with an extended and carefully constructed analysis of the spatial analysis of class and education through a focused and critical review of the relevant literature. This historical approach is also extended to trace the history of urban middle-class educational practices, showing how particular strategies of 'enclave' building around desirable schools have long been part of the repertoire of strategies for social reproduction adopted by the middle classes in cities across England. I conclude this chapter with the research questions which arise from what is in effect an extended literature review and these structure the three empirical chapters (chapters four, five and six). Chapter 3 discusses the methodological and methods issues arising from the first two chapters and indicates the research strategy and design the thesis adopts for this analysis of schooling across space and time. In this third chapter I also describe the rationale behind case study choice, both at the school/neighbourhood level and in choosing Sheffield and London together. Following the empirical chapters which I have outlined above, I conclude in chapter 7 with a synthesis of the research findings which also flags future avenues for research in thinking about how to develop a historical geography of contemporary education in the UK.

Marsden's (1977: 42) point that what is needed 'rather than a discrete "historical geography of education"' is an inter-disciplinary approach, drawing on urban history, urban sociology/geography, the history of education, local urban and educational history as well as the sociology of education.

2 A structural history and a spatial topology of elite and middle-class schooling in England

2.1 Introduction

This thesis, as argued in the previous chapter, aims to provide a new perspective on the geography of elite and middle-class education in England by situating a contemporary analysis of institutional hierarchies and circuits of education within an analysis of how these educational infrastructures of elite and middle-class social reproduction have been produced historically at local/neighbourhood, city and regional scales. The renewed dominance of a transformed south-eastern elite (Cunningham and Savage, 2015), predominantly educated in the 'golden triangle' of elite universities (Wakeling and Savage, 2015b), must be understood as the outcome of 'sedimented', historical processes of regional change (Massey, 1995: 116) which have seen elite schools concentrated in London and the South-East of England (Rubinstein, 1986: 199-201). Understanding how contemporary elite and middle-class circuits of education, and the institutional hierarchies of schools that they produce, are distinctive to London and the South-East compared to provincial cities requires combining a range of literatures which gives this thesis its distinctive theoretical approach.

It involves merging an analysis of the contemporary socio-spatial patterns of social reproduction, circuits of education (Ball et al., 1995), with a Bourdieusian analysis of field and a historical geography, a spatialized 'structural history' in Bourdieu's (1996: 188-229) terms, of elite and middle-class schooling in England. This in turn means doing the necessary 'work of transposition' (Wacquant, 1996: xiii) in analysing the 'field of power' in England, drawing on the historical work of British historians (Anderson, 1964; Rubinstein, 1987a; Cain and Hopkins, 2002; Nairn, 2011) to understand how the spatial 'topology' (Wacquant, 1993: 8) of elite and middle-class schooling⁹ forms part of a broader structural history which continues to divide England and Britain culturally and economically (Martin, 1988; Massey, 2007). Away from a historical analysis of the elite schools of the South-East,

⁹ Bourdieu's 'topological' approach is integral to an understanding of field. He sees it as impossible to understand the position within a hierarchy or the history of an individual university or school in isolation, as it is only through the overlapping effects as different institutions act, that the institutional hierarchy within a field is constructed (Bourdieu, 1996: 131-132; Bourdieu and De Saint Martin, 1996: 236-237).

this also entails thinking about how the less affluent middle classes have developed distinctive national patterns of spatial domination of neighbourhoods providing access to sought-after school-types using strategies of enclave-building which have been remarkably persistent over time. Theoretically, combining circuits and field means considering how circuits of education, and specifically circuits between schools and colleges and universities, provide forms of symbolic capital to the former group, thus strengthening the position of particular schools within the field of schooling at a local and national scale. In methodological terms this involves a network approach to circuits which allows us to analyse how circuits work to constitute particular hierarchies of institutions, shaping the structure of the field of post-16.

This chapter begins (section 2.2) and ends (2.6) with an analysis of circuits of education which indicates the intellectual debt this thesis owes to the concept. The literature examining spatial patterns of social reproduction through the school system has used the empirical concept of circuits of schooling (Ball et al., 1995) as a central theoretical lens to examine how spatial processes of gentrification and suburbanization (Broccolichi and Van Zanten, 1997; Butler and Robson, 2003c; Smith and Higley, 2012) have shaped particular patterns of school choice and student trajectories. An examination of how this literature on contemporary socio-spatial patterns of schooling developed, forms the first substantive section of this chapter (2.2). This feeds into the next section (2.3) which explains how the circuits of education and a Bourdieusian analysis of institutional field can be combined theoretically and empirically. I argue that social network methods allow us to examine and visualise the circuits of education linking particular schools to prestigious universities, with these circuits acting as a form of symbolic capital (De Nooy, 2003) for the schools in question. I then move on to provide a theoretical sketch of how Bourdieu (1989; 1996) uses the concept of field to analyse the institutional hierarchy of elite universities within the French field of power. Following this exposition of Bourdieu's model, in section 2.4 (p. 34) I refer to Massey's (1995) analysis of the history of regional cultural and economic structural change to provide a specifically spatial reading of field analysis. Drawing on Bourdieu's emphasis on analysing the 'structural history' of elite educational institutions, I then (section 2.5) examine the specific history of elite education in England, showing how it forms part of a distinctive historical geography with the contemporary concentration of elites and economic power on the South-East of England (Savage, 2015b), forming part of a longer historical dualism within the London and the South-East, and the rest of the country (Rubinstein, 1977a; Rubinstein, 1977b; Robson, 1986). This structural spatial division in elite and middle-class schooling has also been maintained through a distinctive politics of education which has repeatedly

revealed a pattern of 'regressive modernisation' (Hall, 1987: 17-19) in educational reform contributing to a persistent advantage of elite schools and universities of the 'Oxford-London-Cambridge axis' (Shils, 1955). Finally, the concluding section (2.6) returns to the concept of circuits of education, to examine how middle-class practices of colonising and forming enclaves around particular state schools has a long history stretching back to the late 19th century. This also examines national patterns of middle-class socio-spatial reproduction in urban school systems across England. I end the chapter by summarising these diverse literatures and feeding them my research questions for the three empirical chapters. The methods chapter which follows then details how these questions will be examined methodologically.

2.2 Conceptualizing space and education through circuits of education

2.2.1 Circuits of schooling – a socio-spatial approach to the school choice literature

The phrase 'circuits of schooling' first appeared in a paper (Ball et al., 1995) which formed part of a major study (Gewirtz et al., 1995) in the school choice literature which mushroomed over the 1990s. It was acknowledged from the outset that the creation of a quasi-market in education (Le Grand, 1991; Bartlett and Le Grand, 1993) would have varying effects in different areas because of the specificities of local social geographies, politics and educational histories (Bondi and Matthews, 1988; Burdett, 1988; Gewirtz et al., 1995: 57; Bagley et al., 1998: 6). Local class structure and residential segregation along ethnic and class lines, housing policy and school-building, the state of the local economy and the politics of the LEA were all issues which were likely to mediate the effects of instituting greater parental choice. Circuits arose directly out of this need to analyse the inter-relation of 'choice, class and space' (Ball et al., 1995: 53). In the article that coined the term, circuits referred to the segmentation by class and religion of young people's school destinations and parental decision-making processes, which formed four distinctive socio-spatial routes through North London's education system and an associated hierarchy of schools (Ball et al., 1995: p. 54):

- A. Local community comprehensive schools recruiting a mostly local, working class intake.
- B. Cosmopolitan, high-profile maintained and selective state schools which often recruit from outside their locale.
- C. A local system of independent day schools.

D. A 'parallel but separate' circuits and hierarchy of Catholic schools.

One of the key contributions of this thesis is to show how these circuits have developed and changed. In terms of the circuits of education between schools/colleges and university, the classification suggested by Ball et al. (1995) has changed substantially. The main focus of my approach will be to examine how circuits B and C have effectively merged with considerable overlap between the two sets of schools, with the non-selective schools of group B now heavily affected by gentrification as we will see in chapters five and six. Only options B and C were preferable options for most middle-class parents in the original study. These socially and spatially segregated destinations represented the 'spatial framework' of social reproduction (Ibid: 58) and in this thesis combining the concept of circuits with a spatial Bourdieusian analysis of the field of elite and middle-class schooling will extend our understanding of the spatial structuring of social reproduction through the school system.

At the micro-level the division was largely between the local-orientation of working-class families and the less restricted and spatially mobile orientation of middle-class 'cosmopolitans'. This social class dichotomy in the capacity to be spatially mobile in order to access education and in particular the normative middle-class trajectory of spatial mobility¹⁰ on leaving school and entering HE away from home in a different city has long historical roots (Eden, 1959; Musgrove, 1963; Watson, 1964; Bell, 1968; Holdsworth, 2009). In the case of working-class parents, the decision to stay at the local secondary school was primarily due to pressures on time and finances, but also because of the greater importance placed on children's preferences which tended to be to stay local. Middle-class parents were aware of the issue of distance, but this was not their primary concern with maximizing the likely educational outcome from attending a particular school and 'matching' the child (Ball and Vincent, 1998) to the school being much more important. School choice for middle-class parents was a 'cumulative' process with parents constructing the school career of their children from the choice of which primary school to attend (Ball et al., 1995: 68). Transfer links between certain primary and secondary schools were an important element in this earlier choice. In fact, as we will see below, the circuits were shaped even earlier at the point

¹⁰ When spatial mobility is referred to over this research it almost exclusively refers to two forms of education-related mobility. Firstly, as in this case, to the tendency in England for middle-class students to study at a university away from home (Eden, 1959; Holdsworth, 2009). Secondly, I use it to describe the capacity of, again often middle-class, students to negotiate long journeys to attend a distant grammar, faith or (though less often) comprehensive school. This refers back to Ball *et al.*'s (1995) original circuits of schooling paper. They argued, drawing on Harvey (1989), that a key dimension of class division in choice of secondary school was the willingness of middle-class parents to overcome the 'friction of distance' in sending their children to schools distant from their homes unlike working-class parents and children who were restricted to the local school.

of deciding about pre-school childcare provision. The qualitative school choice literature from which the 'circuits of schooling' concept originates, has delved much more deeply into the non-spatial, class-driven and gendered processes of parental decision-making (David, 1994; Ball et al., 1996; Reay and Ball, 1998; Gorard, 1999). However, the literature that has taken the circuits concept further has tended to concentrate more specifically on how school choice is interwoven with class, residential segregation and ethnicity. In particular, it was the issue of residential choice by largely white middle-class gentrifiers which formed the focus of the next major piece of research which used the term.

2.2.2 Bringing in urban processes – gentrification and circuits of education

The next major work to take up the concept of 'circuits of schooling' was Butler and Robson's work on education and Inner London gentrification (Robson and Butler, 2001a; 2003a; 2003c). A middle-class return to Inner London (Butler et al., 2008; Hamnett, 2003) through the gentrification of areas such as Barnsbury and Stoke Newington (May, 1996) brought about a set of dilemmas and conflicts about schooling as these gentrifiers became parents. Butler and Robson (2003c: 6) argued that the school system had developed primarily to serve the mainly working-class and increasingly ethnic-minority population of Inner London¹¹ and in all but the most socially select neighbourhoods of West London, the incoming middle-class gentrifiers never constituted more than a quarter of the population. In this context a particular set of middle-class circuits arose which were distinctive to both specific Inner London localities and London itself. These circuits 'mould[ed] the nature of the gentrification process' (Butler and Robson, 2003c: 16) with distinctive parental strategies and educational destinations occurring amongst particular class fractions and in particular localities. Three core sets of parental strategies were apparent in the case study areas of Butler and Robson's (2003a: 70-73) study

1. Using economic capital to go private. This was a preference for a significant number of parents in Battersea, Barnsbury and Telegraph Hill. Only in Battersea was this an actual first preference as opposed to an option 'forced' on parents because of a lack of 'acceptable' state provision. The Battersea gentrifiers preference for private schooling perhaps reflected greater private sector employment in Battersea than in

¹¹ This historical picture is complex, with central London having a significant group of middle-class secondary schools in the late 19th century (Fearon, 1868; Gamsu, 2015b).

Brixton or Telegraph Hill where public sector employment was higher (Butler and Robson, 2003c: 13-15).

2. Deploy the cultural capital possessed by professional middle-class households to ensure access to desirable state secondary schools and avoid the lowest performing local schools. This occurred in all areas, but less so in Battersea and in Brixton and Telegraph Hill parents felt politically ambivalent about this approach.

3. Transform performance and ambience of primary schools in locality by swarming around a particular school. Whilst this was particularly successful in Barnsbury and Telegraph Hill it had failed in Brixton, where middle class kids remained isolated in a largely working-class, ethnic-minority population. In contrast in Telegraph Hill the successful colonisation of a local primary school contributed to a 'stable enclavism' which characterised the successful carving-out of a gentrified middle-class space in the area (Robson and Butler, 2001a: 84). The historical roots of this strategy of colonisation and stable enclavism will be examined in the final section of this chapter.

These particular strategies indicate how particular circuits of education are both formed through and contribute towards broader processes of urban, social class residential change. The high proportion of children being schooled outside their home borough underlines the exceptional nature of the circuits of education occurring within London. Bridge's (2006a) study of Bristol gentrifiers showed how the range of educational options available to parents involved in gentrifying inner-city areas was much more restricted outside London with most parents reverting to 'traditional' moves to the catchments of suburban or rural state schools. Butler and Robson's (2003) description of a distinctive 'metropolitan habitus' of middle-class school choice in London thus seems justified. The school choice literature has been quite largely focussed on London and whilst tensions around social reproduction through schooling certainly exist elsewhere, provincial cities have not drawn the same degree of attention.

In a set of studies exploring pre-school 'circuits of care' (Ball et al., 2004; Vincent et al., 2004), Butler and Robson's work on the differentiation of circuits of education by gentrifying middle-class fractions was extended to earlier age groups. These papers contrasted the choices of pre-school provision of largely liberal, public sector, or arts and media professionals in Stoke Newington with Battersea's corporate and managerial professionals. Using Bernstein's theories on space, Ball and Vincent (2007: 1177) show how Stoke Newington's parents tend to have 'spatial grids' which are "more weakly marked" than those in Battersea. This corresponds to 'inclusivist' and 'exclusivist' attitudes towards social mixing, with middle classes in Stoke Newington stressing the advantages of diversity, and those in

Battersea preferring white homogeneity. This liberal/conservative bias was reflected in the different nursery school pedagogies of in the respective areas, with Stoke Newington placing more emphasis on play and the child's freedom and Battersea parents choosing nurseries with more restrictive and developmental pedagogies. These fractional distinctions within London's middle class are thus also detectable at the pre-school stage, suggesting how these middle-class circuits of education are built from the bottom up.

2.2.3 Completing the circuits - from pre-primary to post-16

In the context of this thesis an important finding of Ball and Vincent's study was that circuits of care were progressive or cumulative, with choice of particular nursery schools part of parents' long-term plans for their children's educational careers. Certain nursery schools led to particular primary schools or were used by parents who primarily opted out of the state sector (Ball et al., 2004). The cumulative nature of the effects of school choice is also clearly evident in Butler and Robson's (2003a) study when viewed in conjunction with other evidence. They reported that Islington's secondary school system was becoming 'hollowed out' with the middle classes opting out of the secondary schools in the borough. This has knock-on effects further 'up-stream' in the educational system as over the course of the 1990s City and Islington College's intake became decreasingly middle-class and increasingly working-class and ethnically diverse (Beckett, 2003). This in turn shifted HE destinations from the college away from provincial Russell Group and 'Plateglass' universities and towards the Post-1992 universities in London. It is at the point of post-16 education where it ceases to be a question of 'circuits of schooling' and becomes rather an issue of 'circuits of education' more broadly defined, although the two are often treated as interchangeable.

The issue of extending circuits of education to look at socio-spatial routes through education to post-16 and beyond is a major aim of this thesis and is an area which remains relatively understudied. There is an extensive literature on post-16 choice-making (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970; Gambetta, 1987; Payne, 2003; Foskett et al., 2004) and an equally detailed literature on HE decision-making (Goldthorpe, 1996; Hodgkinson and Sparkes, 1997; Hatcher, 1998; Reay et al., 2005). However, the post-16 stage of education and entry to HE has only rarely been examined from the perspective of how particular circuits of education

relate to local urban geographies and geographies of schooling. One important exception to this, is a set of papers examining the socio-spatial routes taken by post-16 learners in London (University of Brighton and Sirius Seven Software, 2004; Watson and Church, 2009). The focus here is not explicitly on 'circuits' as they do not use this term, but they are observing the same sociological and geographical phenomenon. As part of their study, they provided a typology of post-16 provision across London (Watson and Church, 2009: 398):

1. 'Tertiary reorganised.' Harrow, Richmond upon Thames. One or two FE colleges, no maintained state schools with sixth forms. Just under 20% of 16–19 year olds are in schools rather than colleges.
2. 'Quasi-tertiary.' Hackney, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark and Tower Hamlets. Ealing and Merton. One tertiary college coexisting with some school sixth forms. Up to half of 16–19s studying in each of these boroughs are in schools.
3. 'Sixth Form College reorganised.' Croydon, Havering, Waltham Forest, Newham. FE college coexisting with a sixth form college(/s) and a few sixth form schools. Between 10-33% of young people studying in these boroughs are in schools.
4. '11–18 comprehensive.' Camden, Greenwich, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Lewisham, Wandsworth, Westminster, Barking, Dagenham, Brent, Haringey, Enfield, Hillingdon, Hounslow. Most comprehensives with sixth forms and an FE college, around half of students in schools.
5. 'Selective.' Barnet, Bexley, Bromley, Kingston, Sutton, Redbridge. More than one grammar school, as well as secondary moderns or 'comprehensives'. Most schools have sixth forms and there is an FE college. 50-80% of those studying in each borough are in schools.

This classification remains a useful starting point for understanding London's post-16 infrastructure but the academization encouraged under the Coalition government has frequently involved the opening of many new sixth forms (Vaughan, 2015).¹² Butler and Hamnett (2011: 165-175) also provide a detailed analysis of secondary school provision across East London's boroughs. These institutional formations are also formed historically, with the Outer London grammar schools a legacy of the politics of suburbanisation (Young, 1975), with the retention of grammar schools in the more Conservative voting Outer boroughs, whilst the Inner London Educational Authority (ILEA), pursued a programme of full comprehensivization (Gamsu, 2015b: 13). At the neighbourhood level these institutional

¹² Since 2010, 169 school sixth forms have opened, this was encouraged by the Coalition in part for practical reasons with the compulsory school leaving age rising to 18. However, strengthening the academic school sixth form has long formed part of a c/Conservative approach to post-16 (See 2.5.3).

arrangements interact with long-established or recently changed/changing local population structures of class and ethnicity. Circuits thus run across and through these institutional and neighbourhood settings and are themselves historically produced.

2.2.4 Suburban circuits of education and the growth of an ethnic-minority middle class

The importance of cross-borough and centrifugal movement from inner London outwards towards the suburban boroughs, was noted by Butler and Robson (2003c) as well as Ball *et al.* (2000) in their study of post-16 education in London, and has more recently been examined in detail in East London (Butler and Hamnett, 2011). In the post-16 study covering the whole of London (Watson and Church, 2009: 406) the primary movement of students for post-compulsory education is centrifugal, from Inner London to the peripheral outer boroughs. The move out to suburban, Outer London institutions for post-16 education is an important finding in the context of this study which will examine the effect of ethnic-minority suburbanisation of Outer London grammar schools. An outward movement of ethnic-minority students is also reported in other studies of London. Butler and Hamnett (2010: 2437-2438) also identify a preference for suburban, non-selective secondary schooling and housing amongst aspiring Asian families, a preference which constituted a particular circuit of schooling in East London. Four additional circuits in East London were present including:

1. Independent and selective grammar schools in Ilford, favoured by higher-professional and managerial occupations.
2. A preference for socially/ethnically mixed non-selective schools whilst avoiding schools dominated by certain groups (white working-class or certain ethnic minorities). Some non-local choosing of faith or selective schools for individual children.
3. Predominantly African and Afro-Caribbean-background circuit of faith schools preferred for their reputation for discipline and their distance, socially and spatially, from perceived negative influence of other boys.
4. A selective circuit involving Redbridge's grammar schools recruiting through the 11+ and catchments which sometimes extend beyond Redbridge.

Most recently, Butler *et al.* (2013) argued that the gentrification of Victoria Park reveals how displacement of long-term working-class residents and some early gentrifiers is taking place through education, with certain schools no longer accessible to them. These changes could be behind substantial falls in the percentages of students of Free School Meals in certain gentrifying Inner London boroughs (New Policy Institute, 2015: 6-7). An important finding of

the East London research has been to emphasise the sometimes understated role of suburbanisation in affecting circuits of education and housing market change in London (Butler and Hamnett, 2011: 240). Ethnic-minority suburbanisation is now happening across UK cities, including Glasgow (Mir, 2005), Birmingham and specifically in the city's grammar schools (Abbas, 2007), as well as in Leicester's surrounding suburban villages (Goff, 2008). As a middle-class educational strategy, suburbanisation is certainly not a new phenomenon, a point I will return to below in section 2.6. Similarly, evidence for ethnic-minority middle-class formation and suburban re-location has been noted much earlier (Robinson, 1988; Phillips and Sarre, 1995; Phillips, 1998) but the links between these suburban moves and schooling have only drawn academic attention more recently. In chapter five I will examine these suburban ethnic-minority circuits in greater depth, using a specific case study to show how in London these circuits have combined with a 'regressive' institutional project to restore a grammar school to its previous ethos. In the hyper-competitive setting of the field of London schooling, this school now forms a new institutional conduit into elite HE, thus challenging the older elite public schools and their 'gilded' circuits to Oxbridge.

2.2.5 Rural 'gentrification' and circuits of education across London's commuter hinterland

The most recent papers using the circuits of education concept has examined the role of education in attracting middle-class in-migrants to the area surrounding Dulwich Preparatory School and Cranbrook Grammar School in Kent (Smith and Higley, 2012). Whilst Dulwich Preparatory is a fee-paying preparatory school with historical links to Dulwich College London, Cranbrook is a state grammar school and around half the cohort of the prep school attend Cranbrook. Over 80 per cent of in-migrants surveyed stated that school choice was the core reason for their decision to move to Cranbrook. Nearly three quarters were also moving in from London and many saw the local grammar school education available at Cranbrook as particularly desirable and unavailable in the areas of London where they lived. Their study underlines how educational decisions in London extend over the whole of the South-East region for parents with sufficient economic and cultural capital. This suggests how the institutional field of elite and middle-class schools stretches beyond London for the south-eastern elite and upper-middle classes. Commuting to the capital was common amongst these parents and there are important historical parallels to Pahl's (1963) study of London commuters living in Hertfordshire. In the late 1950s/early 1960s commuters were also more likely to have their children in direct-grant grammars or local private schools than

those who worked locally. This pair of studies suggests that wealthy London commuters have long used the education system of the Home Counties with implications for both housing markets and school segregation at a local level. Viewed in conjunction with evidence revealing a particular concentration of 'service class' and managerial occupational groups (NS-SEC 1.1)¹³ around London in the South-East of England (Hoggart, 1997; Phillips, 2007), we can see how the rural or semi-rural 'peri-urban/urban-fringe/metropolitan countryside' (Phillips, 2007: 290) around London form a particularly strong potential recruiting ground for private schools.¹⁴ Whilst Cranbrook provides an example of education-led 'gentrification' outside of London, it also forms an example of the broader extension of the nexus of elite and middle-class social reproduction outwards from London into the Home Counties.

If this section appears to have been overly-concentrated on London, with only passing references to provincial studies, it is partly a reflection of how what might be termed the 'urban sociology of education' has been skewed towards London and has taken the capital as its reference point. It also reflects the specificity of urban processes and scales within London, with the pressures on schooling being particularly severe as we will see in chapter five. However, it is also possible to overlook the extent to which middle-class socio-spatial practices and circuits within urban fields of schooling have produced national patterns and this will be examined in greater depth in the final section of this chapter. Unlike the previous studies which have examined how circuits of education in London are affected by contemporary urban processes, I wish here to examine how institutional hierarchies of schooling and the circuits of education which form around them, are the result of longer-term historical 'accumulations' of educational power within schools and in the circuits they maintain and create between themselves and particular universities. This will be examined at both the local and the regional scale to allow us to examine how local patterns are tied into and help form broader and historical regional inequalities. Examining this structural

¹³ NS-SEC stands for National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, it is the Office for National Statistics (ONS) official schema of socio-economic class (Rose et al., 2005).

¹⁴ It is worth noting that private school participation varies substantially across the Home Counties. Over the last nine years has hovered at around 5% of the school population in Essex, whilst Surrey has consistently had over 20% of students in the county in private school equating to over 38,000 students, this percentage is surpassed only by Windsor and Maidenhead with a far smaller population. Kent (8%) and Hertfordshire (11%) sit between these two extremes suggesting how there could be particular circuits of education associated with particular upper middle-class fractions of the Home Counties (See Appendix D p. 256, for all the graphs down to local authority level). Essex and Kent have also retained their grammar schools and Hertfordshire has a significant number of partially-selective comprehensives and is also close to Buckinghamshire's grammars. These differences may explain the somewhat lower private school participation in these counties.

geography of educational power with the specific infrastructure of elite south-eastern private and state schools and the specific circuits that form around them is central to this thesis. These elite and middle-class dominated schools form a distinctive sub-field which extends beyond the boundaries of the capital into the surrounding commuter belt of the Home Counties. Circuits of education can be seen to connect the institutions in this sub-field, providing institutional prestige to the schools by connecting them to the same group of elite universities. This symbolic capital strengthens the institutions' positions within the field of schooling and education at post-16 and I now turn to examine how we can combine an approach which uses both circuits of education and institutional field to examine middle-class and elite social reproduction.

2.3 Understanding elite education through a combination of circuits and field

2.3.1 A social network analysis approach to field

This thesis examines how practices of middle-class and elite social reproduction through schooling form specific, locally and regionally differentiated circuits of education, focussing on the post-16 and university transition. These circuits are, however, seen as meshed within specific local, regional and national fields of schooling within which schools and colleges jostle for position, prestige and power. Field has previously been used tentatively to describe how schools are affected by socio-economically segregated neighbourhoods (Byrne and Rogers, 1996) and Savage (2011) has suggested field would be central to a Bourdieusian urban sociology. Strathdee (2009) has also suggested that a sociology of school reputation would also adopt field theory and in my paper examining the history and of the re-location of elite schools in London (Gamsu, 2015b), I provide a brief sketch of how the notion may be applied to understanding schools as operating within an institutional field which is strongly influenced by processes of urban development. Coldron et al. (2014) have also shown how academy reform has been used by locally prestigious state schools, in dominant positions in terms of attainment and OFSTED results, to further bolster their position within local educational fields. Despite these papers, a Bourdieusian framework for understanding institutions, and schools in particular, has more often used the concept 'institutional habitus' (Reay, 1998; Reay et al., 2001), a concept which has been the subject of some theoretical controversy (Atkinson, 2011; Burke et al., 2013) and will be avoided here. Instead, I prefer the concept of field, which Bourdieu defined as a multi-dimensional social space within which actors' positions are determined by their stock of cultural, economic, social and, especially, symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Symbolic capital provides the capacity to

impose the legitimate world vision, hence defining the rules of the game and the field's structure, a 'worldmaking power' (Original emphasis. Bourdieu, 1987: 17). An institutional approach to the educational field was most notably developed by Bourdieu (1989; 1996) in the State Nobility, in his analysis of the field of grandes écoles as part of the broader field of power.

The number of students attending certain universities and courses, particularly at Oxbridge and latterly the 'Russell Group' too, has long been seen as a marker of institutional status. Lindsay (1926: 88) commented that 'the scholarship tradition [...] clings in certain schools' noting how winning scholarship places at the grammar schools marked out certain state Elementary Schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and was particularly associated with more affluent areas. Steedman (1987), writing of the attempts of endowed grammars to replicate public school norms over the same period noted that winning places at Oxbridge was a key indicator of institutional prestige. Similarly, in the inter-war and immediate post-war period, Oxbridge scholarships continued to be the 'blue riband' (Anderson, 1995: 11) by which state grammar schools judged themselves. The use of attaining a 'scholarship' or other competitive place at the subsequent institutional stage as a marker of institutional prestige has not changed. In fact, the extension of secondary schooling after 1944, the closure of most grammar schools in the 1960s and 1970s and the expansion of HE from the 1960s, has brought a 'structural shift' (Bourdieu, 1996: 276) in what kind of 'scholarship' matters in positioning a school within the field of education. This is the institutional equivalent of recognizing as Bourdieu (1996: 326) does, that the value of a degree from Sciences Po or Haute École en Commerce (HEC) in Paris in the 1980s had the same legitimizing effect as attaining a baccalauréat before the second world war. Improving and maintaining the number of students winning places at certain universities is a key strategy for the accumulation of symbolic capital, and Oxbridge and Russell Group places are an accepted marker of social and academic capital by which to judge any state school with a sixth form. With GCSE reform changing the standard well-understood model of school attainment, it is quite possible the university destinations data will become increasingly important as public indicator of attainment (Mcinerney, 2016) and hence as an institutional form of symbolic capital. They indicate to parents and others, both academic success and the possibility of broader social success (at university and afterward) for the school/college's students. Locally, winning places serves a symbolic function, marking the school out from its local peers as a conduit to national institutions associated with middle-class and elite social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1996: 197-201). The rules of the game and the struggle over the

'principle[s] of domination' (Bourdieu, 1996: 265) of this educational field have a specific geography as I will examine historically in sections 2.4-2.5 and empirically in chapter four.

The institutions possessing the greatest stocks of this form of symbolic capital have long been the ancient private schools of the South-East. What will be examined in chapters four and five are how certain elite state schools in the same area are also developing their ties to elite universities. This particular form of symbolic capital is not a static stock – it is not simply embedded as an architectural form, maintained economically as an endowment or fee income or physically embodied by the long-term presence of particular staff. Rather it is continuously formed through the flow of students 'upward' to certain universities or courses. The social network analysis (SNA) approach used in the following chapter links together an analysis of circuits – the dynamic process of social reproduction as it is experienced and patterned, and the analysis of institutional field in the post-16 phase. These circuits are historically formed, one deputy head teacher of a high-attaining religious comprehensive in London commented that the process of establishing a tradition of students going to Russell Group universities was 'cumulative' (Interview with former deputy head, North London faith school). Circuits develop over time, the passage of students through to particular universities over several generations, leave a historical residue, sediments of practices and experience which slowly compounds and reinforces institutional reputation and position within the field. However, these circuits require active and considerable work to maintain and measuring these flows of students provides a snapshot of how the fields of post-16 are structured locally within each of the case study areas.

The use of social network methods to analyse flows of individuals through certain institutions as an indicator of institutional symbolic capital is not without precedent (De Nooy, 2002; De Nooy, 2003). De Nooy (2003: 315-317) described Bourdieu's opposition to the use of SNA methods, which focus on interaction and inter-subjective relations rather than how capitals and the objective relations of power they represent structure particular fields. However, De Nooy (2003: 319-320) argued that symbolic capital can sometimes be observed by proxy through the interactions between individuals, and that the recognition of power relations within a field can depend on the symbolic value of flows of individuals between certain nodes or institutions. In chapter four my analysis of student flows will be used to examine the field of post-16 education. The particular methods, discussed in some depth in the previous chapter, allow an analysis of 'clusters' within the field of post-16, providing various indicators of proximity between certain schools/colleges and particular universities. It thus reveals how

the field of post-16 is structured in terms of circuits – revealing which post-16 institutions tend to feed into which universities, allowing us to infer from this the structure of the field of post-16 and the dynamics of particular sub-fields within that. This theoretical-empirical approach to field which, through the method used, sees institutional positions within the field as nodes within a ‘network’ of flows of students, with schools gaining symbolic capital through fostering circuits which lead to elite universities. The concept of circuits of education was initially developed to analyse collective socio-spatial patterns in student trajectories and choices at 11, but it is used here to examine the post-16 to university transition.

2.3.2 From circuits to field – field as a conceptual framing of elite educational institutions

Bourdieu’s work provides an analysis of the French field of power, defined as the arena within which elite actors from the economic and cultural fields come together to struggle for dominance (Wacquant, 1996: xi; Bourdieu, 1996: 264-265). Within this, the central focus is on the role education, and specifically the role of elite HE, which through conferring academic titles, apparently ‘natural’ and legitimate sources of status and authority, have produced ‘highly dissimulated reproduction mechanisms’ (Bourdieu, 1996: 386) for the dominant classes. Rather than legitimation by birth as for the old nobility, a new ‘state nobility’, legitimised through acquiring academic titles which, even relative to forms of economic capital, have become the key mode of reproduction (Bourdieu, 1996: 272). Bourdieu’s approach is clearly historical, with a central underlying theoretical aim being the description of these long-term shifts in modes of reproduction. However, he also documents changes in the structure of individual fields, including a specific ‘structural history’ of the field of the grandes écoles, which is highly relevant to the approach developed here. I continue to discuss this structural history in the English/British context in section 2.5 below, but it is worth understanding Bourdieu’s conception of elite HE as a field in greater depth, as this provides a central theoretical framework for this thesis.

His approach to understanding elite HE as a ‘field’ is typical of Bourdieu’s relational approach towards understanding the social world. Previously, histories of elite French HE tended to concentrate on a single school, but in order to understand the position of an institution within the hierarchy of elite French HE, it is important to understand how individual institutional changes relate to and affect a broader subset of organizations all competing for

status (Bourdieu, 1996: 131-132). This is what Wacquant (1993: 8) describes as a 'social topology of the grandes écoles', as for Bourdieu 'the most distinctive properties of any establishment can be detected only by first locating it in the overall constellation they collectively form'. The field of the grandes écoles is itself a sub-field of the broader field of HE, within which they form the dominant grouping over the dominated French universities. However, even within the sub-field of the grandes écoles there is a distinct hierarchy, which Bourdieu examines through a multiple correspondence analysis of elite French HE. This reveals a distinction between the 'grande porte', the older, more socially selective Parisian elite institutions, with alumnae progressing to the heights of the civil service, finance and industry, and the 'petite porte', the provincial and newer institutes with a less elite intake and educating graduates for middle-management positions (Bourdieu, 1996: 144). The second key dimension is between the academically dominant scientific and intellectual institutions of the Écoles Normales which were however dominated in social and economic terms by the administrative and economic schools of Sciences Po, ENA and HEC, ESSEC and others (Bourdieu, 1996: 136). Within these dominant elite institutions, those with the greatest intellectual or economic capital are also most likely to recruit students from the cultural or economic fractions of the Parisian bourgeoisie. Those less wealthy students who 'make it' through to the elite sub-field are still largely in dominated positions within the sub-field and are 'directly drafted for the positions that lack a surplus symbolic value' (Bourdieu, 1996: 148-150).

Having analysed the structure of the field as a whole, Bourdieu and de St. Martin proceeded to write a 'structural history' of the grandes écoles, looking at how patterns of institutional activities reveal trends and developments within the field. Using data to compare changes between the late 1960s and the early 1980s, they note how the elite 'establishment' schools have become more socially selective with a widening gap between these schools and the universities whose intake has become less affluent (Bourdieu, 1996: 193-194). Importantly for the purposes of this thesis, they also note the growing proportion of students from the elite French lycées gaining places at the dominant, super-elite institutions, despite the lycées essentially remaining static in terms of their size. Following this discussion of general trends, they describe in detail how the École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC) came to dominate the other French business schools (Bourdieu, 1996: 198-201). These institutions used 'an entire set of collective and individual strategies aimed at the accumulation of symbolic capital' (Bourdieu, 1996: 198) to assert their position. For HEC this included building an alumnae association, obligatory military preparation and sporting events with other elite institutions. The latter strategy was a phenomenon which Honey (1977)

documented as a key strategy for the public schools to confirm their institutional prestige in the late 19th and early 20th century, with playing against older, established elite schools a key indicator of acceptance within the 'community' of public schools and a form of symbolic capital. These strategies are more effective if their intended audience, i.e. students and their families, are likely 'to recognize the particular difference it aims to reaffirm', as it is 'here [that] we enter the logic of symbolic capital, where what counts is making others see and believe' (Bourdieu, 1996: 200-201). The similarities in institutional strategies underlines the conceptual value of using a Bourdieusian frame to understand how historical structural shifts occur within elite sub-fields of the overall constellation of an educational field, be it at school or university level.

2.4 Towards a spatial topology of elite schooling in England

In applying this framework for understanding institutional change, to the field of education at the post-16 phase in England, and more specifically in focussing primarily on middle-class and elite practices within the field of schooling, certain adaptations and additions are necessary. Substantively, this thesis aims at understanding the 'topology', in a Bourdieusian sense, of the field of elite and middle-class schools not only socially, but spatially too and this spatial lens is applied not only at both the local-neighbourhood, meso-city or borough scale and at the macro regional-national scale. This is not a divergence from Bourdieu's original approach; throughout the text he refers to the dominance of the Parisian bourgeoisie, not only in dominating access to the elite of the elite grandes écoles through a network of feeder lycées associated with particular elite class fractions, but also in their position within the more dominant, technocratic and financial groups within the economic field. Both of these trends were increasing, with the dominance of the Parisian bourgeoisie extending across the field of power, much in the way that the de-industrialisation would further strengthen the centrality of London to the British economy and entrench the power of the City financial elite (Thrift, 1990). He described this French geographical imbalance in a later work:

The capital city is – no pun intended – the site of capital, that is, the site in physical space where the positive poles of all the fields are concentrated along with most of the agents occupying these dominant positions

Bourdieu (1999: 125)

It is worth noting that this French economic imbalance is historical, in 1900-1910 Paris had 5% of France's population but a quarter of the wealth (Piketty, 2014: 339). The foundation of

HEC, by the Parisian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and others such as Sciences Po, should not be overlooked in this regard. There is a partial homology in the concentration of wealth on Paris during the period of the late 19th century and the development of these grandes écoles, and the reform and systematisation (Simon, 1987) of the public schools of the South-East of England, which occurred during the same period and on the basis of the same geographical inequality of wealth distribution. I pick up this theme again later in relation to the deep structural underpinning of the geography of English elite education below in section 2.5.1 (p. 38), and Rubinstein's (1987b) work will be drawn on in this regard. However, this point serves to emphasise the importance of the spatial-historical construction of the field of elite education, and the spatial and historical nature of educational fields will be centre stage in this analysis. This is done at the national and regional scale in chapter four and at a more local, neighbourhood level in chapters five and six. In itself, this involves seeing fields of schooling as operating both locally and at the borough or city-level, particularly in relation to the recruitment of students at 11 and 16. When it comes to schools winning places at universities, however, schools and colleges operate within a national field of education, or a field of post-16 more specifically.

Using this Bourdieusian approach to a field of institutions and emphasising the structural history of this field, does not come at the expense of an analysis of contemporary student experience which is described through the analysis of circuits of education. This analysis of fields and circuits together requires a particular adaptation of the concepts of field and circuits as I explained above, with institutions seen as gaining symbolic capital through the functioning of particular post-16 circuits leading to certain universities. However, a structural approach to understanding the geography of elite and middle-class structures of education does not necessarily mean a deterministic approach; as Massey (1995: 65) argued 'it is possible both to recognise specificity and to situate it within the grander historical movements of capitalist societies.' She was referring to a spatial specificity in regional economies but this could equally apply to thinking about how student decisions, experiences and trajectories which take the collective form of circuits of education, are shaped by the historical geography and sociology of education. In fact, combining Massey's approach to understanding regional inequality with Bourdieu's notion of field is instructive. Massey argued that spatial structures in particular regions, developed cumulatively, producing layers of social, economic and cultural formations combining earlier and more recent 'rounds of investment'.

The layers of history which are sedimented over time are not just economic; there are also cultural, political and ideological strata, layers which also have their local specificities.

(Massey, 1995: 116)

This concept of sedimented structures, and, though it is less explicit here, social relations functioning in and between particular places, is particularly important in thinking about the production of an elite educational infrastructure concentrated on London, but also in thinking through how former grammar schools often retained their institutional prestige at a local level following comprehensivization. Massey was however, quite insistent that interpreting these spatial structures was not a deterministic process:

The internal necessity of a spatial structure does not get 'acted out' in the real world in pure form. What takes place is the interrelation of the new spatial structure with the accumulated results of the old [...] this way of looking at the world is in no sense deterministic. 'Structural analysis' as it has sometimes been called, does not necessarily mean 'top-down' analysis; far from obliterating the possibility of variety, it provides an approach to its explanation.

(Massey, 1995: 117)

The structural approach taken here, seeks similarly to understand changes which have occurred and are occurring historically at broad scales, such as the past and continuing concentration of elite schools on the South-East of England, but to do this in a way which is not merely top down, but also includes and situates subjective experience. Bourdieu argued that using field as a notion entailed an intellectual requirement to continually renew a conceptual and methodological framework which mediates objective structure and subjective experience:

The notion of field does not provide ready-made answers to all possible queries, in the manner of the grand concepts of "theoreticist theory" which claims to explain everything and in the right order. Rather its major virtue, at least in my eyes, is that it promotes a mode of construction that has to be rethought anew every time. It forces us to raise questions: about the limits of the universe under investigation, [...] It offers a coherent system of recurrent questions that saves us from the theoretical vacuum of positivist empiricism and from the empirical void of theoreticist discourse.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 110)

For the purposes of this thesis, the key element of re-conceptualisation of field needs to be done is in the methodological approach taken to an analysis of field. In focussing on how schools and colleges are positioned in relation to access to particular universities using a method drawn from SNA, this is clearly a significant modification of his theory, which I have outlined above. However, there have been other notable combinations of Massey's work and

Bourdieu, in particular in the work of Savage et al. (2005) who also refer to the importance of combining Massey's networked understanding of place with Bourdieu. In the case of Savage et al. (2005) this entailed blending a Bourdieusian analysis of habitus and field with Massey's (1993: 66) understanding of place as 'constructed out of particular interactions and mutual articulations of social relations, social processes, experiences and understandings, [...] they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings.' This theoretical approach was used to examine how white middle-class expressions of belonging in and to particular neighbourhoods of Greater Manchester, highlighted the limits of globalisation as entailing 'epochal social change' and the transformation or erosion of local class identities. Within this very different empirical project, one theoretical assumption stands out as particularly relevant to this research:

'within any field, those practices that continue to rely on spatial fixity are most likely to be tied up with claims to distinction than those that do not. [...] Claims to social and cultural distinction continue to rely on an auratic concern to preserve particular, unique locations as "natural" for specific practices [...] Those cultural fields that are still dependent on fixed spaces are likely to remain as significant as ever in generating cultural distinction.'

(Savage et al., 2005: 21)

Education is precisely one of those cultural fields in which spatial fixity is particularly tied to 'claims to distinction'. This is true in particular for elite educational institutions, particularly in HE where Oxford and Cambridge alongside certain London universities,¹⁵ remain the privileged site for elite HE. The 'ancient', medieval-foundation south-eastern/southern public schools have also been remarkably persistent in the case of a small number of elite boys' schools which have preserved their dominant position within the field of education. However, as I discuss in Appendix B many 'newer' public schools within the South-East became

¹⁵ The London universities, specifically University College London, Imperial College, London School of Economics and King's College London, were found to be particularly strongly represented in the educational histories of members of the wealth elite in Wakeling and Savage's (2015b; 2015a) recent analyses. These distinctions between the universities of the 'Golden Triangle' and other provincial universities have a long history. In the late 19th century the provincial, 'civic' universities had far larger percentages of students from fully state-funded Elementary schools, whilst Oxbridge and, to a lesser extent, Durham overwhelmingly recruited students from the prep and public schools (Lowe, 1987). This developing 'tracking system' between different school types and particular universities (Also described as 'loosely coupled systems' by Weick, 1976; See: Reay et al., 2005: 47) was also present in the inter-war period. One national estimate for 1929-30 suggested that state-run Elementary School students accounted for 36% of students admitted to the civic, provincial universities (Dyhouse, 2001: 853). At the University of London this fell to 15.6% and at Oxford and Cambridge it fell again to 10.8% of entrants. In social class terms, Dyhouse's (2004: 4-5) survey of inter-war graduates suggested that the London Universities had a larger higher-professional and higher-administrative background than most of the provincial redbrick universities. Whilst not conclusive, this suggests the idea that the 'golden triangle' of London and Oxbridge universities has long been implicated in a distinct set of circuits of education with a specific group of institutional feeder schools.

established between the 1860s and the inter-war period, cementing this south-eastern nexus of educational institutions as the centre of cultural distinction through education.

As all of this implies, this theoretical approach to both field and circuits involves a strong historical component in understanding the spatial dimensions of the field of elite and middle-class education. The other major modification which is required in looking at the English field of elite schooling is to do what Wacquant (1996: xiii) termed the necessary 'work of transposition' in translating a Bourdieusian approach to understanding the role of education within the field of power in a different national context. In the section which follows, I wish to examine history of the spatial structure of the field of English elite education which can only be understood as the result of accumulated infrastructures laid down to serve the more affluent south-eastern middle classes and elite fractions since the mid-late nineteenth century.

2.5 Doing the necessary 'work of transposition' – the structural history and the spatial topology of the field of elite education in England

2.5.1 Educational elites in the South-East – building an infrastructure of elite social reproduction, spatializing the field of power

Eton was not just connected to the centres of English/British power, it is itself such a centre, as it was in origin a Royal foundation, designed to serve the religious and secular needs of political elites from the very beginning [...] A geography of British power expresses this old connection to the state: Windsor Castle and Eton College sit close by one another on opposite sides of a bend in the river Thames, together making up a hugely impressive visual image of British history and British power.

(Original emphasis. Joyce, 2013: 283)

There is and has always been, as Joyce implies above, a structural geography of educational power within England and the UK. The major institutions of elite secondary schooling have long been concentrated on the South-East of England in line with the developing geography of political power within early modern England. Eton is a singular case and is one of very few public schools which has consistently drawn the majority of its

intake quite exclusively from elite families from the late 19th century until at least the 1950s (Rubinstein, 1986: 173-174). However, Eton formed part of a network or a 'community' of institutions, which became the 'system' of public schools in a process of 'systematisation' focussed on the final third of the century (Honey, 1977: 141; Leinster-Mackay, 1981: 63-64; Simon, 1987: 105). This latter period coincided with a key period of economic and social change within England during which economic power, and the great financial and commercial fortunes and middle-class salaries which accompanied it, became concentrated on the South-East of England (Rubinstein, 1977a; Robson, 1986). These changes had huge, long-term implications for the geography of social class and economic, cultural and political power within the UK. That these two periods coincided is critically important for understanding how and why the contemporary educational infrastructure for elite social reproduction became established. Eton forms just one site in a broader structural geography of educational power; in Bourdieusian terms the elite institutions which dominate the field of schooling are spatially skewed towards the South-East of England. In this section I first outline a broader critique of the regional history of the UK and how this created a distinctive geography of class which is currently changing (Savage, 2015b), but in ways which, as we will see in the subsequent empirical chapters, are in part a mutation of contemporary social and economic structures rather than the end of previous regional divides. Following this, I examine how the foundation and systematisation of elite schools was shaped by these regional and structural tendencies within English/British¹⁶ capitalism, drawing in particular on several 'structural' approaches to British history (Anderson, 1964: 27-28; Cain and Hopkins, 1987). Bourdieu saw shifts in the sub-field of elite HE as inextricably linked to, and generative of, changes in the field of power more broadly (Bourdieu, 1996: 198, 236-237). Fitting an analysis of these elite English schools into a broader structural history of capitalist social structures in England forms part of the necessary 'work of transposition' (Wacquant, 1996: xiii) in translating Bourdieu's approach to a UK context.

¹⁶ I use English/British and some uses of the term 'British' in reference to systems of schooling which vary substantially within the four nations of the UK but which share an elite, largely private sector with a relatively similar elite educational culture. In reference to pre-1921 Great Britain and Ireland, I use this term as it represents the dominance of graduates of the elite schools and universities of South-East England over the other nations. In reference to the contemporary period, I more frequently refer to an English elite system, as it is now quite clear that amongst the political elite at least, devolution has made possible a set of educational trajectories which operate largely separately from the elite educational nexus of the South-East. Scottish MSP's (Keating and Cairney, 2006; SMCP and David Hume Institute, 2015) and since 2015 Scottish Nationalist Party MPs in Westminster, whilst still overwhelmingly from professional middle-class backgrounds are far more likely to be educated in Scottish state schools and universities than their English equivalents.

2.5.2 Anderson-Nairn, the 'gentlemanly culture' of elite education in England and the economic and social underpinning of the Oxford-London-Cambridge nexus

The Anderson-Nairn thesis of British class relations, provides a stimulating but controversial starting point for the analysis of British social structure. Rather than rehearse or delve into the intricacies of the controversy and debate that followed the publication of the *Origins of the Present Crisis* and *The British Political Elite* (Nairn, 1964; Anderson, 1964; 1966; 1987; Thompson, 1965; Johnson, 1980; Fulbrook and Skocpol, 1984; Hickox, 1995), I wish to concentrate on one small area of this thesis which has perhaps drawn less controversy and resistance. Anderson refers to the fusion which occurred between the rising bourgeoisie and the aristocracy in which the developing Victorian public schools played a central role. The public schools, along with the reformed university system and the civil service exams, created a 'deliberate systematized symbiosis' between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, with attendance at public school becoming the 'fetishized criterion of the "gentleman"' (Original emphasis: Anderson, 1964: 31-32). His definition of a single hegemonic class resulting from this fusion, requires some serious sociological finessing not least in a Bourdieusian reading of the field of power in which different elite fractions struggle for dominance. This was one of the key lines of criticism in Thompson's angry riposte, which noted the need for an empirical approach to understanding fractions of the rising middle classes (Thompson, 1965: 325; Hickox, 1995: 316-317). However, historically speaking, the idea that the public schools were key to creating a new governing elite which combined the aristocracy, commercial and financial elites and members of the new professional middle classes has broad historical support (For a summary of this historical consensus, see: Allen, 1982: 87). Furthermore, the conceptualisation of an elite which was defined in part by its 'porousness' and in which any son from the 'polymorphous reservoir' of the professional, salaried middle classes could theoretically pass into the elite through the 'regulating institutions of assimilation' (Anderson, 1964: 32-33) is theoretically useful. As Robert Anderson (2006: 55) usefully summarises, there was a gradual opening of Oxbridge and other universities to the expanding late-Victorian middle class and this continued during the inter-war period (Jenkins and Jones, 1950: 102-103). Despite substantial empirical misgivings about the Anderson-Nairn thesis, or at least the earlier statements of it, the fusion of landed and financial interests, with its offspring treading the gilded circuit of education from Eton, to Oxford to Westminster, finds itself embodied in the personality of David Cameron, suggesting that for a particular fraction of the British elite, it retains some empirical value. Anderson and Nairn's Gramscian analysis of the selective openness of the British

ruling class provides us with a critical theoretical basis for understanding how elite forms of education within England are partially open to new social formations. Indeed, in this regard they suggest the possibility for a Gramscian historical approach to Turner's (1960) sponsored mobility model, who argued that elite education in England always involved a certain porousness to a selected few from the dominated classes who were raised up as a sort of social 'alibi' (Vincent and Dethomas, 1987: 294). Anderson and Nairn also point to how these schools were and remain, though in a changed form as we will see below (section 3.3), the bearers a pseudo-aristocratic 'gentlemanly' culture (Anderson, 2007; Miles and Savage, 2012).¹⁷

Pseudo-aristocratic public-school practices are of key relevance for understanding institutional logics of certain lesser public schools, state grammars and the contemporary 'super-state' schools. In the case of the influence of aristocratic culture on elite education in England, Robert Anderson (2007) provides the clearest examination of the history of this process. Anderson argues (2007: 265-266) that whilst the reform of the ancient public schools, Oxford and Cambridge was largely a bourgeois achievement, the culture which they adopted had a distinctive aristocratic heritage.¹⁸ This was despite the small presence of the aristocracy in most public schools in the 19th century which increasingly drew from professional middle-class families (Allen, 1982; Rubinstein, 1986). The head of Radley School, summarised the logic of parental aspiration that lay behind this apparent contradiction, noting in 1872, just 25 years after the school's foundation, that a key function of the school was "to confer an aristocracy on boys who do not inherit it" (Honey, 1977: 228). From the outset then, the gentleman within this 'gentlemanly culture' and set of

¹⁷ Robert Anderson (2007: 273-274) argues that there is some ambiguity about whether to see the gentlemanly culture as a creation of the elite bourgeoisie of the South-East or whether it was rather 'a middle-class triumph' of the public schools, being largely dominated by middle-class parents desiring to attain status through what was effectively a 'virtual' form of gentlemanly culture (Honey, 1977: 151-153). It is certainly true that only a very small number of public schools were dominated by the aristocracy or the commercial and financial elite (Rubinstein, 1986), with most public schools being dominated by the less affluent professional and commercial middle classes. The survival of this set of cultural dispositions amongst the English middle class and the elite remains as a form of acknowledging, but also avoiding, articulating an advantaged class position (Miles and Savage, 2012: 608-609). Miles and Savage also argue that the role of elite educational institutions remains powerful in preserving the old trajectories of reproducing gentlemanly control of the BBC, the Arts and, especially, banking and it is precisely the role of specific 'gentlemanly' tropes within elite education which will be examined here.

¹⁸ In thinking about the competing aristocratic-bourgeois roots of this aristocratic culture, I favour Cain and Hopkins' (2002: 646) approach towards their concept of 'gentlemanly capitalism' which they describe as 'a process which we regard less as an exchange of "tradition" for "modernity" than as a selective amalgamation of elements inherited from the past with introductions from the continuously evolving present.'

institutional practices was somewhat of a phantom presence and this was to continue as the twentieth century progressed. This educational culture was, especially at the outset, at distinctly male-dominated educational culture with middle-class women excluded both educationally and occupationally from the professional employment it allowed access to (Delamont, 1989: 248-249). Describing the 1950s as a period of dampening of the cultures of public and intellectual critique of elites before the war, Shils argued that:

All English society has undergone this process of submission to the moral and cultural--but not the political or economic--ascendancy of the aristocracy and gentry. [...]

The culture which has now regained moral ascendancy is not an aristocratic culture in the sense that it is the present culture of an active aristocracy, nor is it the actual culture of the gentry, it is the culture traditionally inspired by those classes, the culture appropriate to certain institutions allied to these classes.

(Shils, 1955: 11-12)

This distinction between the actual political and economic power of the aristocracy, which was waning (Cannadine, 1999), and the continuing cultural influence of a pseudo-gentry/aristocratic culture is important. For Shils (1955: 11-12), this culture was embedded within the grammar schools which in turn looked to the public schools and the old Universities (i.e. Oxbridge) for their model, an argument which has also been made more concretely by (Reid and Filby, 1982) who traced the public school heritage of the school sixth form from the late 19th century into the 20th. Veblen's (2007: 240-241) analysis of the importance of supposedly 'archaic' educational practices for institutions wishing to assert educational status provides an early sociological analysis and critique of this educational phenomenon of replicating historical 'traditions' as a means of establishing institutional prestige. I wish to make a clear distinction here between certain cultural trappings, particularly in sport, particular 'scholarly' modes of academic study, associated with the 'gentlemanly' culture of the public schools, and the broader culture of the British middle classes in the 1950s, which as Savage (2010: 68-92) has argued does not clearly align with Shils' argument. Nevertheless, these persistent 'invented' traditions (Hobsbawm, 1983), including prefects, rugby, cricket and distinct internal school hierarchies, remain influential in boys' elite schools today as we will see in chapter five. Their influence is not uniform, but is rather concentrated on particular institutions within the sub-field of elite schools, though this culture also has its adherents in less established secondary schools.¹⁹

¹⁹ The examples of the Durand Academy in Brixton, with its Sussex boarding school campus, and Mossbourne Academy, with its entry at 14 for rowers, portray how academies serving 'inner-city' neighbourhoods are adopting archaic forms of public school culture as part of a strategy to enhance their institutional status.

It is important to see this influence of gentlemanly culture within elite schooling as part of a broader set of socio-economic and cultural institutions which continue to dominate British, and especially English society. Cain and Hopkins (1987; 2002) provide the most detailed exposition of this approach to understanding the historical formation and transformation of the British state. Their work describes how the re-structuring of the British economy away from industry and towards finance and the City of London in the late 19th century (Cain and Hopkins, 1987: 4-5; See also: Lee, 1984), coincided with the development of a particular set of 'gentlemanly' values regulating elite white male behaviour (Cain and Hopkins, 2002: 38-49). This shift also had a distinct geographical focus which concentrated economic, financial power on London and the South-East (Cain and Hopkins, 1987) whilst concurrently, the reform of the public schools and Oxbridge ensured the 'triumph of metropolitan over provincial values' spanned the cultural as well as the economic and political spheres (Anderson, 2007: 265). This massive re-balancing of the British economy to the benefit of the financial and commercial sectors concentrated in London and the South-East, in the later imperial period laid the structural foundations London's current dominance (Dyos, 1971; Rubinstein, 1987a; Martin, 1988; Cain and Hopkins, 2002; Dorling, 2008). Nairn (2011: 243-244) terms this region the 'Crown Heartland', which is a useful theoretical gloss on this dominant political-cultural-economic regional bloc which has combined the hard power of City finance with the soft cultural power of Oxbridge and the public schools alongside the reformed modern monarchy. These powerful educational institutions remain geographically concentrated in this Southern heartland, with the public schools, particularly as we will see in chapter four those in the South-East, in a 'long-existing symbiotic relationship' with Oxbridge (Steedman, 1987: 113).

Sociological explorations of the education of elites have repeatedly found the dominance of the 'Oxford-London-Cambridge axis' (Shils, 1955: 11-15) with attending university at London, Oxbridge, and now, though to a lesser extent, Durham, Bristol and Exeter too (Wakeford and Wakeford, 1974; Wakeling and Savage, 2015a), strongly associated with elite status across various occupations. There has been some opening up of elite occupations to students of other universities and (state) schools alongside the continued maintenance of the gilded circuit of education, which is perhaps better thought of as a circuit of power, running from the public schools of the South-East through Oxbridge and into Parliament, the City, the Inns of

Court and other professions (Williams and Filippakou, 2010). Despite the growth of high-performing state schools, largely though not exclusively drawn from the remaining grammar schools, the elite private schools still remain more successful at Oxbridge applications than state schools with similar, or better, A-level attainment (Sutton Trust, 2008: 16-17). Oxbridge recruitment remains geographically biased towards the South-East as the Sutton Trust (2011) has shown and which will be returned to empirically in chapter four.

The production of this south-eastern constellation of elite educational institutions and a specific educational culture protective of a phantom, pseudo-aristocratic heritage, did not occur in a political or economic vacuum. This cultural hegemony was at various points deliberately politically created and contested as I will return to in the next section. It was also dependent on very different forms of wealth and middle-class culture than were present in the North of England. The financing of this renewed elite infrastructure can only be partly surmised here.²⁰ For a small number of schools, land ownership was key to their financial stability. This is particularly true for Eton College, Winchester, Rugby School, Bedford School, Christ's Hospital, St. Paul's School and most recently Tonbridge School which now profits from increased rents for students living in a newly renovated University of London halls of residence (Gamsu, 2016b). With the exception of Winchester, their medieval land and property-holdings were located in London with schools able to profit from rising property values as the city grew (Clarendon Commission, 1864b: 4-5). London's economic growth thus strengthened these educational institutions which had historically been closest to the early modern state (Jordan, 1974). These properties remain an important part of the portfolio of investments for these historic elite institutions but this small grouping of super-wealthy institutions, as well as schools with smaller investment income, are now highly dependent on stock market investments. However, for most of the 'public schools' which formed part of the nascent 'system' of middle-class and elite education in the late 19th century, fee income was key to financial survival. In the late 19th century, very few schools were actually dominated by financial, commercial or aristocratic elites, rather it was the middle classes with an annual income of perhaps a few hundred pounds who dominated numerically and were relied on to pay fees (Rubinstein, 1986: 173).

²⁰ See Appendix A for a fuller examination of the historical and contemporary funding of British private schools.

It is here that Rubinstein's argument regarding the geographical dualism of middle-class wealth, and to a lesser extent culture, is so important – being able to afford secondary education in the late 19th century and into the early 20th was a considerable financial undertaking for professional families. Middle-class incomes became increasingly concentrated on the South-East of England in the last third of the nineteenth century (Rubinstein, 1987a), precisely the period in which demand for a public school education increased and the schools became more systematised. The wealth of the City was already the dominant economic force within the UK by the late 19th century, and there was no Northern parallel to the 'large white-collar administrative and "middle-management" class' which existed in London (Rubinstein, 1987b: 100). This absence of a sizeable affluent Northern middle class was compounded, for Rubinstein (1977b: 113-115; 1986: 200), by the non-conformist, non-Anglican cultural disposition of much of the provincial, and specifically Northern middle-class. A defining feature of the early elite public schools was their Anglican faith (Honey, 1977: 284), an anathema to those in the more frequently non-conformist northern middle classes who were anyway barred from Oxbridge by their faith until the University Reform Act of 1854. These are the economic and cultural foundations of the regional imbalance which saw the elite schools most closely associated with the pseudo-aristocratic gentlemanly, Anglican culture of Oxbridge concentrated on London and the South-East.²¹

The stability of the core, 'super-elite' of southern and primarily south-eastern private schools is a remarkable phenomenon which rests on the deep structural embeddedness of these institutions. Their preservation is not a natural historical artefact but is an actively and passively maintained product of their effective role as part of the English/British State. The very substantial economic reserves of this elite core of the private sector, and an intake in the South-East which has not seen its economic position considerably eroded since the 2008 crisis (Stewart, 2011; Hutton and Lee, 2012), is in stark contrast to the finances of many private schools in the provinces as will be seen in chapter four. The work of this section has been to show how the historical conjuncture of the late 19th century was such that there was not the cultural and socio-economic basis for the construction of a large set of elite private schools (there were private schools, though fewer) in the North of England in the

²¹ I discuss how these late nineteenth century geographies of class meshed with the project to create an elite 'national' educational culture within the public schools and Oxbridge in Appendix F. I argue that the geography of elite schooling had pretensions to be national (and, through the empire, international) in its influence but as it represented the culture of a particular elite and middle-class fractions concentrated on the South-East of England, it was always strongest in that region's educational institutions.

way that there was in the South-East. This theory is not without questions – as Robert Anderson (1995: 31) has noted, Rubinstein’s contention that Oxbridge and the public schools were and are particularly associated with a southern middle class is ‘not fully demonstrated empirically’. A key aim of this thesis will be to assess the contemporary case for this argument, which will be examined in chapter four. In doing this, and putting aside the debate in which they were engaged, I echo the approach taken by Perry Anderson (1966: 32) in reconstructing history not ‘for its own sake’ but ‘in order to understand the present.’ It is the deep structural underpinning of contemporary patterns in schooling which gives these historical debates about the structural and geographical evolution of class in England their importance. These historical arguments provide a theoretical lens through which to analyse and contextualise the geography of elite and middle-class education and the circuits of education which are involved in it. Moreover, it also allows us to see the importance of a particular pseudo-aristocratic academic cultural form, particularly in sport, architecture and the updated academic curriculum, which remains largely defined and determined by the curricula of the older elite public schools and Oxbridge, forming a nexus of educational power concentrated on the South-East of England.

2.5.3 The politics of regressive modernisation: England’s educational state and the preservation of elite educational forms

The preservation of this elite infrastructure of schooling in the South-East has also formed part of various broader political projects which have not gone uncontested. I wish to emphasise two salient points here, firstly that there has long been an implicit spatiality to the politics of education. Just as the Oxford-London-Cambridge nexus has persisted as the locus for the education of English elites, so has a policy framework which benefits it. Protecting the elite educational infrastructure of the ancient public schools, their newer upstart competitors, and Oxbridge has not only occurred through specific policy decisions pertaining to these institutions. Rather the broader direction of educational change has frequently been oriented towards preserving and renewing the institutions of the elite whilst extending the model provided by elite public schools into the state sector. This policy drift has tended to have been pushed by central government, through elite civil servants and politicians who have long been disproportionately Oxbridge and public school educated (Savage, 1983), which has often led to conflict with more autonomous and progressive local authority experiments (Savage, 1983: 271; Anderson, 2006: 114).²² The tension between the centre dominated by public school and Oxbridge men (and later women) and a more

²² For examples of this discussed in greater depth, see the sub-section in appendix F (p. 299).

progressive local council has re-occurred on several occasions. Moreover, this tension between a centralising dominant metropolitan elite acting implicitly or explicitly with the interests of their alma mater and against the often more progressive forms education proposed or controlled by local government, was not in truth challenged by the arrival of the New Right, in fact the institutions of the south-eastern nexus of educational power have been highly effective at adapting to the neoliberal state. The weakening of local state control since the 1980s is thus not only the result of neoliberal reform, but also the logical extension of an old tension within the British and, especially since devolution, the English educational state.

In this section I wish to examine how elite forms of schooling have been persistently maintained by the metropolitan elite operating through and within the British and later the English, state. What I wish to focus on is how selective, elite or elitist forms of education both in the private and state sector, were transformed but also maintained over the 1970s and 1980s, during the early period of neoliberal educational reform. This was a response, not only to pressures caused by Labour's abolition of direct grant status or by some kind of 'Thatcher effect' disrupting the gentlemanly educational norms and practices of the Oxford-London-Cambridge nexus, rather these pressures for change came in part from within. I will begin by examining how private education was remade over the 1970s in response both to parental demand, academic pressures from the state sector and transformations in the economic field. Following this, I then examine how abolition of Direct Grant schools fed directly into the Assisted Places scheme, a policy which showed how a barely hidden spatial and class logic of supporting both the less affluent middle class and the more vulnerable set of private schools created by the Direct Grant reform. Within the state sector, I then examine how post-16 reform was used to cement the academic school sixth form, with arguments between Conservative ministers and Labour-led authorities providing evidence of the implicit geography of the regressive politics of the metropolitan elite and the English state. Thatcherite or no, reforms since comprehensivization have tended to protect and adapt to elite forms of education. The role of comprehensive schooling and local housing markets within this will be examined in the following section (See especially 4.2.2). This period of modernisation of patterns of social reproduction in the immediate post-grammar school period marked a key turning point in the direction of the English educational state, and the set of changes which have followed are in many senses 'regressive' for reasons which I will now examine.

The outcome of Thatcher's, and subsequently New Labour's, reforms has been a 'regressive modernisation' in Stuart Hall's (1987: 17-18) sense of the term. Hall used this phrase to describe the Thatcherite project of reform which is now more commonly understood as the beginning of a broader project of neoliberalism. Nevertheless, it is worth briefly referring to the original context, describing Thatcherism, he argued:

It is a project - this confuses the Left no end - which is, simultaneously, regressive and progressive. Regressive because, in certain crucial respects, it takes us backwards. You couldn't be going anywhere else but backwards to hold up before the British people, at the end of the 20th century, the idea that the best the future holds is for them to become, for a second time, 'Eminent Victorians'. It's deeply regressive, ancient and archaic.

But don't misunderstand it. It's also a project of 'modernisation'. It's a form of regressive modernisation. Because, at the same time, Thatcherism had its beady eye fixed on one of the most profound historical facts about the British social formation: that it never ever properly entered the era of modern bourgeois civilisation. It never made that transfer to modernity. It never institutionalised, in a proper sense, the civilisation and structures of advanced capitalism - what Gramsci called 'Fordism'.

(Hall, 1987: 17-19)

Hall was referring to a 'return' to a 19th century liberalism which, if the arguments of Rubinstein, Cain and Hopkins are taken seriously, was never truly dominated by industrial capitalists but by commercial and financial interests partly fused with the old landed aristocracy. This 'archaic' cultural and economic project aimed to dismantle the increasingly dissatisfied political alliance that had constructed and maintained the post-war social-democratic settlement and replace it with a liberal, market- and consumer-oriented form of 'common sense', in the Gramscian understanding of the term. Nearly thirty years after this appraisal of Thatcherism was written, this political, economic and cultural trajectory within education policy has firmly embedded pseudo-Victorian cultural values and institutional forms within the school system. Ball (2012) has described how what was begun under Thatcher continued under New Labour, noting the rising role of philanthropy and the early City Academy model, and taken to its perhaps ultimate conclusion with the rapid expansion of the Academies programme under the Coalition. The English state was frequently, and from the outset, 'reluctant' in its engagement in education, and there has been a 'rewinding of history' with the 'second liberalism' demolishing the social basis and the institutional forms of the more pro-active and progressive forms of state intervention and control over education (Ball, 2012: 94).

This regressive modernisation has taken a specific path in relation to schooling and elite forms of schooling in particular. In education, there were undoubtedly tensions within the Conservative camp between traditionalists, wishing to preserve (through assisted places) or recreate (through the failed restoration of grammar schools. See: Walford and Jones, 1986) the supporting institutions and curricula of Annan's (1955) cultural elite, and the more radical neo-liberals who wished to trim the educational focus of state education back to a basic minima of English, maths and science with the market deciding the rest (Exley and Ball, 2013: 13). However, Annan's (1990) pessimism about Thatcher's erosion of the cultural elite was not completely vindicated and whilst the cultural elite has opened up to those educated outside the south-eastern educational nexus, the Oxbridge-public school elite have seen their role 're-worked' but ultimately retained (Griffiths et al., 2008: 206-207). Similarly within the state, the demographic of civil servants opened up but only very slightly, with only small declines in the percentage of privately schooled and Oxbridge educated under Thatcher and Major administrations (Kavanagh and Richards, 2003: 184-187). If there was a 'Thatcher effect' it involved the shift in civil servant culture away from policy advice and an interest in the consequences of policy towards efficient management, a shift which would later contribute to the failure of more progressive 14-19 education reform in the 2000s (Hodgson and Spours, 2006). This civil-service culture change echoed a parallel shift in the culture and values of elite private schooling.

What happened was a transformation and a mutation rather than the complete weakening of the educational infrastructure of elite and middle-class reproduction which had been embedded during the late 19th century. The public schools had known a period of crisis during the Great Depression, right through the 1930s and into the second world war, with inflation, economic crisis, falling birth rates and increased competition from state grammar schools all affecting the picture (Hillman, 2012: 238). In the early years of the war, public school and Oxbridge educated civil servants actively and successfully lobbied for a commission to examine state financial support in the face of falling numbers (Savage, 1983: 270-271). Whilst the economic threats reduced after the war, the 1950s saw increasing pressure from the state grammars, particularly with Oxbridge taking less interest in sport and family connections, as Rae (1981: 155) put it, perhaps referring in part to his experience at Harrow from the mid-1950s:

'To the dismay of elderly dons with rose-tinted memories of the "good college men", academic merit became the criterion for entry.'

Rae's analysis of what followed is perhaps the key text for understanding the shift that public schools underwent from the late 1960s into the 1970s. Centralised admissions and the expansion of HE combined with competition from the grammar schools, forced public schools to raise their academic standards (Rae, 1981: 155-161). This was done with substantial success with independent schools winning 64% of the open awards to Oxbridge in 1979, compared to just 10% for comprehensive schools (Rae, 1981: 157). These changes coincided with the move away from classics and towards maths, sciences and economics (For a parallel historical process in Australia, see: Teese, 1998), increasing moves towards co-education, the decline of corporal punishment, a shift towards less hierarchical teacher-student relationship and a changing role for prefects (Rae, 1981: 112-148). This subject shift towards maths and sciences occurred globally with elite schools in Australia (Teese, 1998) and the Parisian elites increasingly choosing these subjects (Bourdieu, 1996: 194) during the post-war period, perhaps in recognition of the growing dominance of banking and finance, which extended their power over industry and other areas of the economy (Bourdieu, 1996: 327). This cohort of students who went through the reformed British public schools were those described by Coleridge (1986) who went to work in the City transformed by the Big Bang.²³ This curriculum change reflected broader shifts in the economic field which have reinforced the interdependence of elite private schools and City of London, with the latter providing employment to one of the few occupational groups who can now afford school fees without some level of 'sacrifice' (Centre for Economic and Business Research, 2015).²⁴ In the UK, this modernisation of curricula preserved the link between Oxbridge and the public schools. It was in this sense, much like Thatcherism, simultaneously modern and, in its political implications, regressive, preserving and reforming the gilded circuit of education between Oxbridge and the public schools.

This regressive nature also reflected important shifts in middle-class preferences in relation to education and the nature of elite education in the UK. Rae (1981: 144) argued that changes were also stimulated by a more pro-active and engaged role of parents with open days, a new phenomenon in boarding schools, providing impetus for the reform of boarding school dorms, a mode of schooling which was in decline. More interesting however, for

²³ See appendix A for a discussion of these links between the public schools and the City.

²⁴

contemporary understandings of elite education, Rae argued that what was happening was also a shift in what it meant to be elite:

As had happened in the past, it was a question of the style adapting to the accepted modes of leadership in society. Many British institutions at this time went in for extensive heart-searching about the nature of their government. It was not just the universities and the schools. As one Anglican priest put it: "The hierarchical model is no longer relevant." But institutions found that it was impossible to dispense with hierarchy altogether and independent schools were no exception. In the schools the hierarchy loosened but did not disappear.

(Rae, 1981: 125)

The shifting role of hierarchy within the school changed, with sporting prowess and prefects now part of a broader range of important elements to status within the school and beyond, with academic attainment absolutely essential. We can see here the parallels with Khan's (2011: 76-77) about the shifting meaning of hierarchy in elite schooling. That the beginnings of these shifts in forms of elite educational hierarchy and organisation occurred just prior to Thatcher's arrival in power is important.

As I noted above, Thatcher represented a challenge to the cosy public school-Oxbridge Tory elite, and Annan's cultural elite, most of whom were educated prior to the changes in the private sector just referred to. However, it should be noted that these changes were in part a defensive operation against a Labour Party that threatened abolition (without ever carrying it through) several times (Hillman, 2012) and perhaps a negative shift in public opinion towards the old snobbery of the 'public' schools. These changes occurred against a backdrop of 'class antagonism' of the 1970s, and with the cultural reform of the schools, the old snobbery had according to Rae (1981: 146-147) been replaced by a defensive unity, with students far more likely to defend their schools than they would have been at the end of the 1960s. This shift serves as a reminder that the Thatcherite reforms that followed came after a period of upper-class defensiveness around private schooling. In educational terms the regressive politics in relation to elite schooling was made explicit in the 1979 Conservative manifesto:

'The Direct Grant schools, abolished by Labour, gave wider opportunities for bright children from modest backgrounds. The Direct Grant principle will therefore be restored with an Assisted Places Scheme.'

(Dale, 2000: 279)

This portrayal of direct grant schools as advantageous to the British working classes was, to be generous, a sleight of hand; 49.9% of the free places at direct grant grammars were from

professional or managerial backgrounds (Registrar General's Classes I and II), with only 10.3% from classes IV and V (Donnison, 1970b: 201).²⁵ Students receiving these free places were still less affluent than those on fee-paying places of whom 71.1% were from classes I and II, however, any claim that these schools were institutions with a majority working-class intake and a specific social mobility mission is clearly fallacious. Importantly, this figure was notably higher for those with large sixth forms (71.3% for girls, 64.4% for boys), which were the schools that sent higher percentages of their students to Oxbridge and to university in general compared to the other direct-grant grammars (Donnison, 1970b: 196-199). It is worth considering how the direct-grant model of central grant funding with the school having autonomous self-governance responsible directly to the Department for Education (DfE), provides a historical antecedent of the current autonomous neoliberal governance models and their forerunners (Grant-Maintained Schools, City Technology Colleges, Foundation Schools). With the exception of the Roman Catholic schools, which tended to be more socio-economically diverse and opted to go comprehensive after 1976 (Maclure, 1990: 199-209), the direct grant schools often positioned themselves at the apex of the local educational hierarchy. This model of funding and relative autonomy was thus geared towards protecting and strengthening locally (and sometimes nationally) elite selective forms of schooling. The central point is that neoliberalism has melded itself to an earlier mode of conservative educational organisation which had a particular spatialised class logic, which I will now examine.

The Assisted Places scheme was a recognition that full restoration of direct grant status was not (yet) possible, and it combined a particular class logic with a spatial logic that implicitly 'recognized' the regional cleavages within the private sector. Assisted Places financially bolstered the private sector which was substantially expanded by Labour's ill-thought-out reform of the direct grant grammars. This reform allowed 119 of the 174 direct grant grammars opted to go private rather than lose their institutional autonomy (Lowe, 2005: 288). The beneficiaries of the Assisted Places scheme were not generally from 'unambiguously working class' backgrounds, with researchers preferring Denis Jackson's term of the 'submerged middle class' to describe less affluent and less senior, but still highly educated professionals that students were often recruited from (Douse, 1985: 215-216; Fitz et al., 1986: 185-186). There was also a distinctive geography to the Assisted Places

²⁵ Overall the direct grant schools surveyed by the commission were just under 60% Registrar General's Class I and II.

scheme. The direct grant grammars had tended to be concentrated in urban areas but, more specifically, were clearly geographically concentrated in the cities and conurbations of the North-West (Donnison, 1970a: 58). These schools in the North West and private schools in the region as a whole received a disproportionate number of assisted places relative to its population in the 1980s (Bradford and Burdett, 1990: 41). This was true for all the Northern regions, with the assisted places scheme effectively offsetting some of the geographical polarisation caused by private schools in the South-East growing faster than those in the North (Bradford and Burdett, 1989: 51). This underlines the relative regional fragility to the private sector, particularly in schools that were previously direct grant grammars, a theme which will be returned to in chapter four. It also shows how there has been a persistent geography of elite and middle-class social reproduction, with private schooling structurally weaker than in the South-East. The assisted places scheme was abolished after Labour's election in 1997, but it is only in the past eight years, and especially since the crisis, that the full implications of this have been felt, this will form a key substantive focus in chapter four.

The other key element of regressive reform under Thatcher which is particularly important in understanding how middle-class social reproduction through the state system now occurs, is the reform of post-16 education over the 1980s. This provides an important example of the conflict between largely (though not exclusively) provincial, Labour-led urban councils coming and a Conservative central government concentrated on protecting the models of state schooling which were closest to the public school-Oxbridge archetype for what constitutes an 'elite' education. The period of education past 15 or 16 developed as the 'sixth form tradition' within the elite public schools during their period of reform in the late 19th century (Reid and Filby, 1982: 17-39). Based on the ideas of Arnold and other public school reformers of the 19th century, this envisaged a small community of scholars, forming a separate, academically selective 'school within a school' and creating a clear internal hierarchy between students based on age and academic excellence. This model had been reinforced in 1902 Education Act (Robinson, 2002), which strengthened the grammar schools at the cost of other more progressive and experimental forms of secondary education (Brooks, 1991). During the inter-war period these schools, including as we will see King Henry's Boys, sought to replicate the public school model of the sixth within their own institutions. In the post-war period, this sixth form model was bolstered by the Crowther Report, which largely argued for the preservation of the sixth form in its elitist mode, and

comprehensive school reform in the 1960s neglected post-16, leading Pedley (1977) to criticise this as a lost opportunity.

As staying-on rates continued to rise and against a backdrop by the late 1970s of rising unemployment and falling birth rates, experiments by local authorities with sixth form colleges (SFC) and further education (FE) colleges did pose a radical alternative and a structural challenge to the model of the school sixth form. Facing budget cuts from central government, several largely Labour-led, urban authorities submitted plans to close school sixth forms and combine them in SFC or FE systems. This resulted in a political tussle within the Conservative cabinet, with Thatcher apparently delaying the publication of a report on post-16 which offered support to the sixth form college model (Reid and Filby, 1982: 209). The change of education minister in 1981, with the more free-market Keith Joseph replacing the 'wet', Mark Carlisle, heralded the end of this partial continuity of the post-war political consensus under Carlisle, with Joseph blocking Manchester and Birmingham's plans to abolish school sixth forms. This was as the Times Educational Supplement commented at the time, 'a back door method of re-creating grammar schools' (TES, 1981. In: Reid and Filby, 1982: 213) because, sixth forms in the early comprehensives tended to be larger and more academically successful in more affluent suburban areas (Benn and Simon, 1970: 335).²⁶ As Harland (1988) also argued, those comprehensives modelled on or previously having been a grammar school which were the most likely to preserve their sixth form. Already in the mid-1970s there was evidence of middle-class students, where they were in comprehensives, tending to be concentrated in comprehensives with sixth forms (Kerckhoff et al., 1997: 29-30). What this amounted to in many ways was that 'differentiation' by track and institution type at 16 and through examination-level in the new GCSE, replaced elimination by selection at 11 (Harland, 1988: 408). The logic of post-16 reform in the 1980s was again to preserve and protect the model of the school sixth form, which was far closer to the elite public school model than the SFC and FE alternatives. This pattern of models and curricula, effectively built from the top-down has been a recurrent element of an educational system directed by a metropolitan elite²⁷ around preserving its ancient and most prestigious institutions (Reid and Filby, 1982: 240-242). The effects of this within the state system are

²⁶ The gap between comprehensive sixth forms in privately-owned neighbourhoods and council estates or mixed areas was maintained thirty years later, though the gap did narrow slightly (Benn and Chitty, 1996: 516-519).

²⁷ Both Keith Joseph and Kenneth Baker were privately educated, at St Paul's and Harrow respectively, followed by undergraduate degree/s at Oxford.

particularly important, where these regressive forms of modernisation have meshed with institutional hierarchies in ways which have mutated through various models that have all preserved the advantage of middle-class families using the state system.

Aside from the ending of the assisted places scheme, what has occurred over the 1990s and 2000s has not deliberately brought about a major challenge to this elite educational nexus. In fact Labour's abolition of the assisted places scheme certainly weakened the position of certain private schools, particularly those that had previously been direct grant grammars, and the effect of this has been entrenched by the financial crisis with a specific geography (see chapter five). Within the state sector, some of the key changes in middle-class patterns of schooling were the result of the maintenance of neo-liberal patterns of admissions and league tables combining with rapid urban change. These spatial changes to patterns of middle-class reproduction within non-selective state schools will be examined in the following section, but it is worth noting here that those comprehensive schools with the highest attainment have also tended to have far lower proportions of their students on Free School Meals than local or national averages (Sutton Trust, 2006; 2013). Labour's substantial investment in education between 1997 and 2010, did little to really shift the underlying patterns of social reproduction through the school system. This has not necessarily meant rising segregation of the school system taken as a whole but rather schools remaining more or less static in their segregation of intakes (on attainment and deprivation measures) over the 1990s and early 2000s (Gibbons and Telhaj, 2007: 1300; Harris, 2010: 21). At the local level however, residential change has brought about more considerable changes in intake with gentrification and suburbanisation crucial to shaping institutional hierarchies to suit strategic patterns of class advantage. These current changes, and their deep historical roots, will be examined in the following section.

Before examining the role of urban change in producing particular forms of institutional hierarchy, it is worth referring to how the flawed reforms to post-16 under both Conservative and Labour (Hodgson and Spours, 2006) governments, alongside the maintenance and extension of school choice and league tables have combined with increasing HE participation to shape institutional hierarchies at the school to university transition point.

What has happened in effect, is the stagnation of 'democratising' trends in the school-type composition of elite universities, with the percentage of state school students at the Russell Group, falling slightly over the late 1990s and early 2000s (Raffe and Croxford, 2015: 328) but effectively static since 2002-03 and 2012-13 at around 75-76% of students though with a slight improvement in 2013-14 to 77.2% (Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, 2014: 197; Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, 2015: 90). These figures vary considerably within the Russell Group, with the 'golden triangle' of certain London universities and Oxbridge, as well as Bristol, Durham and Exeter, performing substantially worse (Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, 2015: 91) which tallies with findings that these universities have a larger number of graduates in elite positions than the rest of the Russell Group (Wakeling and Savage, 2015b). To this long-developed (Lowe, 1987) 'iron law of hierarchy' of status differentiation within HE (Croxford and Raffe, 2015), must be added the persistence and evolution of a particular set of hierarchies at post-16. The failure of local-authority-led post-16 reform in the early 1980s, combined with Labour's failed attempt at 14-19 reform and the coalition's regressive reform of Key Stage 4 and 5 curricula and exams (Hodgson and Spours, 2006; 2011), have repeatedly undermined more comprehensive forms of post-16 provision and cemented the position of older, more selective institutions. The protection of state school sixth forms by the Conservatives created the basis for a new form of institutional hierarchy at a local level as post-16 and university participation rose, with schools with sixth forms located in advantageous neighbourhoods and with particular histories as the dominant local school, able to better position themselves as market-oriented measures were introduced. These local urban hierarchies vary spatially in relation to particular local geographies of ethnicity and class, which I will now examine, but they also vary nationally with the field of post-16 education finding its dominant institutions concentrated in the South-East of England.

2.6 Urban middle-class educational practices – a historical analysis of enclave building

In this section I wish to examine how the early systems of state schooling very quickly developed local hierarchies in relation to urban patterns of class formation and residential segregation. Elite forms of schooling that rely on fee-paying tend to be largely a-spatial in that there tends not to be a spatial requirement of living in a certain neighbourhood or within a particular distance to qualify to access the school. However, the large majority of less affluent parents have tended to be more constrained to the locality for their choice of

schooling. From this has stemmed the far broader and more widely experienced practices and strategies of social exclusion practised by the less wealthy fringes of the middle class in order to provide a relative educational advantage. The contemporary pattern of middle-class enclave building, discussed in relation to inner-city gentrifiers in London in the final part (2.5.5) of this sub-section, has a long lineage. These are not, to be clear, the same set of behaviours, institutional hierarchies or circuits of education, but they represent how institutional fields have from the very beginning meshed with patterns of residential development and both deepened and reflected forms of segregation. I conclude this section with by arguing that the patterns of middle-class social reproduction through the state school system, whilst strongly influenced by individual urban contexts, are in some ways national with a particular form of local middle-class continuity circuit now common across most 'comprehensive' school systems. Whilst the use of the public school system has from the outset had a clear geographical bias towards the south-east, the state system has always been national and urban white middle-class behaviour constitutes the main focus of this section.

2.6.1 The scholarship school – 'a force in its own right': patterns of scholarship winning and contemporary parallels

The nascent state system of the late 19th century primarily provided compulsory elementary schooling. This system was largely, though never exclusively, distinct from the system of less prestigious grammar and private proprietary²⁸ secondary schools. The elite 'public' schools largely sat above these institutions though the boundary was initially somewhat porous (Leinster-Mackay, 1981). For students from 5 to 12, there was state or 'voluntary' (largely Church-run) provision of basic education in the Elementary schools. These schools were intended to cater for the working classes in what was intended to be a largely separate system. Despite substantial expansion in opportunities to access secondary education in various forms, the depth of this class distinction by the inter-war period was sufficiently strong for Llewelyn Smith to claim in his follow-up to Booth's (1892; Collet, 1892; Smith, 1892; Tabor, 1892) survey of education in London that:

"elementary school class" is used [...] to mean the persons belonging to the categories who are accustomed to send their children to public elementary schools. It

²⁸ Proprietary secondary schools were technically privately owned, rather than being charitable, endowed grammar schools. In some cases this also meant they were run for profit.

is in the main an economic classification, since the people who habitually pay fees to send their children to schools of a non-elementary type belong for the most part to the income-tax-paying classes. Most of such families are not scheduled by the School Attendance Officers, and probably the great bulk of them would fall within the sections G and H of Charles Booth's classification.

(Smith, 1930: 249)

Elementary schools developed in counter-point to the preparatory schools which established closer and closer links to the public school system. Prep schools also adopted an academic tradition that was not limited to a rigid and often narrow curriculum of maths, literacy provided by many state Elementaries (Blyth, 1967: 30-34; Wrigley, 2014: 6-7). However, this division was partially muddled by the dramatic expansion of state scholarships into the secondary system following the 1907 Free Places scheme. This move, one of the major state interventions which created the system of 'sponsored mobility' Turner (1960) would later critique, had a number of important consequences. Following the attempt by progressive urban councils to develop an alternative model of secondary education in the form of higher grade schools (abolished in 1902 by a Conservative central government), the free places scheme further entrenched the grammar school and, by extension, the public school model through providing sponsored free places for high-attaining students (Robinson, 2002). The victory of this academic model was not only a defeat for alternative models of secondary schooling, it entrenched a pattern within English education in which earlier stages of education would be dominated by competitive selection for entry to the elite form of the subsequent educational phase. For the Elementary Schools of the early twentieth century, they were effectively transformed into 'a pre-selective machinery for the "scholarship" at 11' (Simon, 1974a: 225-226) with intensified divisions between the lower and the higher sections of the schools, with the latter increasingly dominated by examination preparation (Blyth, 1967: 29). The effects on the elementary schools of this 'logic of the ladder' (Gamsu, 2015a) were not only internal but were paralleled by the formation of distinctive urban hierarchies between schools on the basis of scholarship success.

The role of the scholarship school in attracting a particular social strata to the neighbourhood could become 'a force in its own right', pulling in aspiring and established middle-class parents (Marsden, 1987: 118, 170). Marsden's (1991) in-depth study details how a local elementary board school, Fleet Road School, became a highly successful scholarship winning school. Whilst situated on the fringe of wealthier Hampstead in the then more mixed neighbourhood of Kentish Town, its recruitment and internal organization meant that those winning scholarships were predominantly from the lower-middle class and upper-working

class. In fact, it attracted 'aspirational' children who travelled quite long distances using the railway, although most scholarship winners were more local (Marsden, 1991: 182-183). The school remained successful over a long period, from 1890 well into the 1920s, although it eventually slipped from its spot as 'The Champion School' for scholarship winning in London (Marsden, 1991: 187).

Lindsay's (1926) work details further examples of the persistent nature of school reputation in Bermondsey, then a relatively poor, working-class borough. Relative to the then more mixed borough of Hackney and the suburban borough of Lewisham, Bermondsey won a small number of scholarships to secondary schools between 1914 and 1923, 309 compared with 1,373 in Lewisham and 1,489 in Hackney. Of these 309 scholarships, 154 were concentrated in just four of the 30 Elementary Schools in the borough. These schools were either situated in a better neighbourhood, away from the docks, or they had long-standing reputations as former Higher Grade schools; there was according to Lindsay (1926: 88), a 'scholarship tradition which clings in individual schools'. This tradition involved 'active preparation' for the scholarship exams, the setting of homework and employing 'more active masters'. Relative to the other Bermondsey Elementaries, these schools were high-performing, but they still did not compete with the number of scholarships won in Lewisham or Hackney. Lewisham schools like the suburban Stillness Road School won on average 21.2 scholarships per year over the same period. As in Bermondsey three or four Lewisham schools dominated the scholarship awards and these were situated in higher-class areas with better housing where the parents commuted to central London for work. These district and borough level inequalities in scholarship winning persisted, with then more affluent areas like Dulwich and North Hackney consistently gaining considerably more scholarships between 1905 and 1935 (Campbell, 1956: 87-90). There are important parallels here with contemporary forms of institutional hierarchy and how this is linked to residential segregation.

Outside of London, we can also see similar evidence during the inter-war period of selective recruitment into the most prestigious forms of secondary schooling with the school's neighbourhood clearly playing a role. Bradford was the most progressive and ambitious authority in extending free, full-time, post-Elementary provision during the inter-war period (Simon, 1974a: 83). Given this, it provides an interesting example of class divisions in circuits of schooling at the Elementary to Secondary transition and thanks to Lindsay's (1926: 145-161) pioneering study we also have suitable evidence to explore this. Bradford

operated a system of selection by exam of children aged between 10 and 12 who were allowed to sit the exam twice in consecutive years. This was the exam for the 9 free municipal secondary schools, 4 central schools, the school of arts and crafts and the four aided schools – Bradford Grammar Schools and the Roman Catholic schools. Of 5,000 examined annually, 3,000 qualified for some form of post-Elementary provision with only 1100 accepting free places to do so. A free place at the Bradford Grammar Schools for boys had ‘come to be looked upon as a prize’ for reasons that will become apparent (Lindsay, 1926: 146). This high level of non-take-up of places is seen by Lindsay (1926: 152) as being heavily affected by social environment and proximity to secondary school, with ‘sheer economic necessity’ (school-leavers could earn £1 a week in the textile mills) being highly important. Lindsay (1926: 151) also attempted to classify take-up rates by area and Elementary school and noted how one school in particular, situated in a ‘good’ area, ‘serves in practice as a preparatory department’ for the grammar schools. Ninety percent of students qualified for secondary education and fifty percent accepted their places, much higher than the city average (58% qualifying, 23% accepting). This is similar to the preparatory school-private secondary school model Blyth (1967: 34) describes and it is interesting that a very similar model arose within the state-funded system, suggesting the possible colonisation by middle or lower middle class groups. This is also very similar to the evidence presented by Jackson and Marsden (1962) when they examined the geography of entry into grammar schools in Huddersfield, which I examine on page 61. Most revealing is the distinctive social class composition of the grammar school compared with the other secondary schools:

Male parents and guardians of Bradford entrants 1924-25

Fathers of Pupils on Roll (England and Wales, 1920-21)

<i>Selected Occupations</i>	<i>The Grammar Schools (Boys and Girls)</i>	<i>Other Secondary Schools</i>	<i>All Bradford</i>	<i>County Boroughs</i>	<i>All Country</i>
<i>Wholesale traders (proprietors and managers)</i>	25.4	7.5	10.3	10.3	8.8
<i>Members of other professions</i>	23.1	2.7	6	11.9	12
<i>Traders' Assistants</i>	1.2	5.4	4.7	0.9	0.8
<i>Skilled workmen</i>	8.9	38.1	33.5	20.8	20.1
<i>Unskilled workmen</i>	0	10	8.4	2.9	3

Table 1 Table to show the percentages of selected occupational groups in Bradford schools relative to city-wide and national educational figures.

Data: (Adapted from Lindsay, 1926: 156-157)

Despite the most progressive inter-war system of schooling in England for free places with, relatively, huge uptake amongst working-class families, Bradford still maintained substantial class distinctions within secondary education. Bradford Grammar School, as a direct-grant grammar, was administratively and financially outside the Council's control and it maintained a socially-select, predominantly middle-class intake. Working-class groups in contrast were primarily present in the municipal 'central' schools where middle-class professionals and proprietors were not the majority. The grammar schools were dominant within the local field, providing the only major conduit to the universities, a position the schools would maintain in the post-war period.

The existence of locally elite schools whose reputation and status is determined by a capacity to win places at the next higher stage of education, secondary schooling in these earlier cases, is theoretically important to the conception of field that has been developed above. This is based on the idea of institutional prestige formed through the symbolic capital of individuals winning scholarships in the case of elementary schools, or university scholarships or places in the case of secondary schools. The spatially relative nature of institutional success and prestige, with elementary schools in Bermondsey still far behind those in Dulwich, North Hackney and Wandsworth, despite their local success, is also important. It underlines the locally relative nature of institutional hierarchy and prestige, something which will be returned to in my examination of university access in suburban comprehensives in chapter six. A school which outperformed its peers in Bermondsey in terms of scholarship entrants was a locally prestigious school, but was still distant from the success of Stillness Road School in suburban Lewisham which won a far higher number of scholarships. A final point to take from this is the very early role of schooling in acting as a residential attraction for parents seeking to gain educational advantage for their children. This not only involved commuting but also, as Bill Marsden implies, enclave building. Housing practices were thus from the outset woven into the production of unequal urban structures of social reproduction. This relationship between school hierarchies and housing was to increase in the post-war period, which I will now examine.

2.6.2 Post-war practices and strategies of the urban middle classes: from grammars to comprehensivization in the suburbs and the creation of stable 'enclaves' in the city

The existence of distinctive local hierarchies of elementary schools before 1944, reveals how middle-class residential patterns have long influenced the hierarchical structure of local educational fields. More recently, much of the gentrification literature which has examined the role of education, has discussed the role of local primary schools in forging stable 'enclaves', local middle-class communities which form 'archipelagos [...] float[ing] on the surface of a wider urban society from which they are largely detached' (Atkinson, 2006: 830). In certain gentrified neighbourhoods, primary schools become a focus for the social networks of the white middle-class arrivals, who over a 10-20 year period colonise the school and the area immediately surrounding it (Robson and Butler, 2001b: 81-82; Butler and Robson, 2003b: 1081-1082; Butler et al., 2013: 12-14). These schools act to provide 'insulation' from other less 'desirable' schools and children and ensure a safe, 'incubating' environment for middle-class social reproduction (Atkinson, 2006: 822). These patterns are clearly tied into processes of gentrification, with working-class and students of colour sometimes being excluded from the colonised, enclave school (Butler et al., 2013: 16-18). A historical lens is helpful here in understanding the historical roots of this class strategy of colonisation through residential choice around a local school. The urban sociological literature examining the role of schooling has tended to emphasise middle-class spatial mobility at the point of secondary school choice (Gewirtz et al., 1995; Ball et al., 1995) as providing advantage, either through moving house or parental support for expensive or time-consuming long-distance commutes to desirable schools. Butler and Hamnett (2011: 149) also described how Inner London middle-class parents have long looked outwards towards the grammar schools of Outer London and the Home Counties since comprehensivization in Inner London in the 1970s. In contrast, the historical roots of middle-class colonisation of areas around particular schools and the circuits of education that result, have drawn less attention. This history runs very deep indeed and I wish to foreground an analysis of these contemporary practices of 'enclaving' and local middle-class circuits through a spatial reading of the history of education, which I continue here in examining the post-war period. This sub-section traces developments in the post-war period, from the tripartite to the contemporary, noting in particular the distortion of the progressive aims of comprehensive reform through the mediating role of class segregation on the housing market.

2.6.3 Middle-class colonisation of the local primary school – continuing 'the scholarship tradition' under the tripartite system

The classic texts of post-war sociology of education include substantial evidence of residential housing strategies around particular sought-after primary schools during the tripartite era. It is worth emphasising that during this period school catchments arguably had greater implications at primary school level, given that most grammar schools recruited across very large areas. Dennis Marsden (1967: 40) was quite explicit about this:

In a town where the population is stable the schools – certain schools belong to the local middle class.

Parents may choose a house near the school with the best record of grammar-school successes. Headteachers are not obliged to publish such figures, but it is a very unusual middle-class parent who would move into a new district without taking careful soundings of the local schools and quickly producing a selection-rating. [...] Middle-class areas in some way “take over” their local school and make it successful by their support.

This sense of deep domination of schools by a local middle class community is important for thinking historically about the contemporary circuits in gentrifying neighbourhoods, as will become clear from the analysis here and in chapter six. Marsden’s assertions here were corroborated by his earlier work on Huddersfield, where local grammar school intakes were dominated by a students who had attended a few primary schools in middle-class residential areas (Jackson and Marsden, 1962: 28, 229). This suggests how circuits of education in the tri-partite area were based on more conventional suburban feeder primaries serving as the main conduits to grammar schools which were often themselves located in suburban areas.²⁹ The essential mode of operation of circuits of education to grammar schools in these provincial cities appears to have changed relatively little between the inter-war and tripartite, post-war periods. Despite important structural differences, in relation to more recent studies of ‘enclaved’ primary schools or nurseries (Vincent et al., 2004: 242) we can see how the formation of classed spatial strategies towards state schooling has historical precedents. These precedents were laid down by the role of suburban elementary and later primary schools in ensuring passage to grammar schools.

This issue of suburban bias towards middle-class primary and secondary institutions was developed in Campbell’s (1956) study of London’s school system in the inter-war and immediate post-war period. Between 1920 and 1945, the grammar schools of inner London became increasingly working-class whilst those in outer London and London’s border

²⁹ There are a litany of memories of being bussed across the city and often out to the suburbs amongst working-class students who attended grammar schools after 1944 (Shroobree, 1988: vi-vii; Black-Hawkins, 2001: 36; Galvani, 2010: 81).

Counties were relatively unaffected (Campbell, 1956: 45-50). Campbell (1956: 52) identifies three main reasons for this:

1. Expansion of the number of secondary school places compared with population size.
2. Increased numbers of scholarships being offered through the LCC's policy of encouraging greater working-class access to secondary schooling.
3. Internal change in the class structure of London's population.

This latter factor was being driven in part by the growth of inter-war London suburbs, both within and outside the London County Council's (LCC) administrative borders. This was funded by cheap mortgage rates, the affluence of a 'new white-collar salariat' (Buck et al., 2002: 23) and new extensions to London's transport network. Evidence of the effects of this middle-class withdrawal are present in Inspectors' reports on secondary schools in Islington (1905), Stepney (1905), Fulham (1927), Westminster (1928), Chelsea (1935) and Dulwich (1937). This did not affect all secondary schools the same way, as the most established public schools were able to maintain their intake through student commuting or by moving out of London (Campbell, 1956: 59-62). The differentiated effects of middle-class withdrawal from the city had significant effects on staying-on rates within different grammar schools. In an indication of how middle-class social reproduction would develop, the sixth form was already a crucial element of school reputation just as scholarship winning was and continued to be at the Elementary stage (Campbell, 1956: 106). In 1926 the proportion of pupils aged 16 or over in 6 London-region independent schools varied between 17.9% and 37.5%, in 5 grammar schools in suburban middle class areas of outer-London the proportion was between 13.7% and 19.3% whilst in 5 poorer grammar schools in East London it was between 5% and 11.3%. Suburbanisation thus shaped the size of sixth forms, a phenomenon which continued into the post-war tripartite and comprehensive eras, as I will return to below. Moreover, Lowe (1997: 89-95) argued that suburbanisation extended the stratification of school hierarchies, not just between the suburb and the inner-city but also between middle-class home-owning suburbs and post-war suburban council estates.

2.6.4 Comprehensivization, post-war suburbanisation and the growing importance of selection at 16

What began to change with the beginning of major comprehensive school reform from the late 1960s was the shift of the spatial requirement for accessing sought-after schools from catchment on entry to primary to secondary school entry (generally) at 11. Although feeder

school systems operated in some areas, this was frequently combined with a catchment area requirement. Before delving into how new processes of selection and circuits of education developed in the comprehensive era, it is important to note the major social transformations in housing that occurred alongside these educational changes. By the early 1960s home-owning was the norm for the majority of the professional middle class and the white-collar lower-middle class (Hamnett, 2005: 58). In 1971 when comprehensivization was in full swing, these figures stood at 75.8% for the former group and 59.3% for the latter. During the post-war period, suburbanisation and home-ownership continued and began to extend into the more affluent sections of the working class, even before council house sell-offs in the 1980s (Clapson, 2000; 2005). Lowe (1989: 6) described the educational implications of this suburban development noting how new post-war housing was creating 'a new suburban social class of first generation owner occupiers'. These families created considerable political pressure for abolition of the eleven plus because of the anxiety caused if their children failed. Indeed, Lowe (1989: 8) argued that the need to placate this group probably contributed to general Conservative acquiescence in and, in certain LEAs, support for comprehensivization. Disappointment and a sense of having received the second best option, was clear in a survey of parents in a middle-class suburb whose children had attended the local secondary-modern (Carter, 1962: 62). Despite higher rates of GCE participation and staying-on than at other non-suburban secondary moderns, there was still a strong sense of inferiority amongst a number of middle-class, home-owning parents. The political basis for comprehensive reform thus rested in part on a relatively affluent grouping ensconced in newly expanded suburbia.

The comprehensive system which was established in most areas by the late 1970s did establish new spatial forms of selection and circuits of education that were distinctly different in spatial terms from the grammar system. As we will see in the case of Valley Hills School, the Sheffield suburban comprehensive examined in chapter six, some secondary modern schools transformed themselves under the comprehensive system, becoming established as key conduits for the suburban middle-class circuits of education found in the South-West of Sheffield. Lowe (1997: 85) noted how comprehensive schools in Birmingham had drastically different intakes, with relatively affluent lower-middle class commuter suburbs on the city's fringes, ethnically mixed inner-city neighbourhoods and working-class overspill suburban estates. In the former it very quickly became clear that comprehensives, when dominated by and arranged around the needs of a local, suburban middle class would have a very strong effect on local house prices. Guratsky (1982: 9) argued that this house-price based allocation of school places, would create:

'a vicious circle of equally self-perpetuating spatial and social inequality within the comprehensive sector. There will emerge clearly identifiable "grammar school-type comprehensives" alongside equally clearly identifiable "secondary modern-type comprehensive[s]."'

Already in the early-mid 1970s, parents in Sheffield were already making housing decisions on the basis of catchment areas for suburban schools (Gunn and Bell, 2011: 183). This isolated example is corroborated in part by Guratsky's (1982) study of school allocation through home-ownership in Walsall. Buying houses on the suburban western side of the catchment area of Sneyd School, then a sought-after and over-subscribed school, was an important strategy for some lower middle-class families (Guratsky, 1982: 22-23). Whilst this school would eventually close (Walsall Borough Council, 2009; The Plastic Hippo, 2009), elsewhere in the Midlands, Guratsky's prognosis was particularly prescient.

In Solihull an attempt to reintroduce selection, which unlike in Walsall was completely abolished, failed in the face of local opposition. However, as both Lowe (1989: 11) and Walford and Jones (1986) argued, this was not an opposition based on a commitment to an egalitarian form of comprehensive schooling. The borough of Solihull was created in 1974 from three fairly distinct areas, a working-class Northern area, separated by the A45 from the affluent suburbia built around the old Solihull village and the eastern upper-middle class commuter villages. The comprehensive system as applied to the latter two areas effectively cemented the nature of the school-neighbourhood relationship creating middle-class enclaves with no mixing with working-class children from the Birmingham overspill estates in the North of the borough (Walford and Jones, 1986: 251). When parents voted against the Conservative attempt to re-introduce selection, Keith Joseph responded:

if it be so, as it is, that selection between schools is largely out, then I emphasize that there must be differentiation within schools.

(Lowe, 1997: 38)

What he was referring to was the not the common use of streaming and setting within schools but the creation of differentiated curricula. This occurred not only through the expansion of vocational alternatives to academic qualifications but through ensuring that the new GCSE beginning in the late 1980s contained distinctive levels with the top grades only open to those taking the higher papers (Gipps, 1987; Chitty, 1989). In effect creating and reinforcing differentiation even within a common school-leaving exam. This underlines a much broader failing of comprehensive reform to offer any meaningful curriculum reform, leaving schools to amalgamate grammar and/or secondary modern traditions (Chitty, 2003),

with the former being particularly pervasive at post-16 level. However even without this internal differentiation, in areas like Solihull, comprehensive reform entrenched the suburban middle-class enclaves created by inter- and post-war suburban expansion. Catchment areas embedded local middle-class circuits which had relatively little overlap with the students and schools in working-class areas. The political consequences of this are important:

[...] a comprehensive system which conceals social class stratification and inequality by geographical segregation actually serves the Right better than an open selective system. It takes the uncertainty out of the educational process, by enabling those with sufficient money to move to the catchment area of 'appropriate' schools and ensure the schooling of their children whatever their ability. Their vision of comprehensive education has little in common with the Left's view of increasing social and educational equality, but instead is concerned with obtaining some of the perceived benefits of independent schooling without the necessary additional expense.

(Walford and Jones, 1986: 252)

What Walford and Jones point to here is the hidden politics of creating local white middle-class enclaves around certain schools in the comprehensive era. In chapters five and six, the role of this classed and racialized urban conflict in shaping circuits of education and inequalities between different institutions will be emphasised. Thirty years on from this article being published the frontiers of struggle over housing for education and middle-class social reproduction may have shifted towards the inner-city in places like London. However, the essential logic, that of dominating a specific locality and creating a local, middle-class environment with a school at its centre, remains the same. What is less true in the Sheffield case is the extent to which this is linked to a process of inner-city gentrification but rather stems from the continuing middle-class concentration in the suburban South-West.

2.6.5 The historically situated gentrifier 'stable enclave' in inner London

This historical lens shifts our understanding of the enclaved behaviour of the gentrifying middle classes in certain areas. Despite their different 'urban-seeking', 'anti-suburban' preferences, the strategy of colonisation of primary and secondary schools appears to a common strategy for the post-war middle classes who are reliant on state education. It may be occurring in different geographical sites and implicated in very different urban processes, but the combination of home-ownership and clustering around a particular school, be it for entry to primary or secondary schools, reveals a persistent structural socio-spatial pattern of

middle-class social reproduction after 1944 and especially after comprehensivisation. What is different in the case of inner-city gentrifiers at least in the late 1990s and early 2000s is that there seems to have been a relative paucity of 'acceptable' local secondary provision in certain gentrified areas in Inner London. In the Telegraph Hill area where Butler and Robson (2003c; Butler, 2008) noted a middle-class enclave around a particular primary school, secondary school options were provided by selective and private schooling outside the borough. Similarly Beckett (2002) also reported a declining presence of white middle-class students attending the inner London City of Islington College over the 1990s. Butler and Robson (2003a) corroborated this absence of white middle-class gentrifiers from secondary schools in the South of Islington. However, recent research on schooling in Hackney suggests this gentrifier absence from inner-London state secondary schools is now changing.

In Hackney, the middle-class presence in Stoke Newington School and tight catchment area enclave is of relatively long-standing (Raveaud and Zanten, 2007) reflecting its earlier gentrification than other parts of the borough. More recently this sort of comprehensive enclave, historically associated with suburban areas in the 1970s and 1980s, has begun to appear at Mossbourne Academy and, just over the border in Tower Hamlets, at Morpeth School (Butler et al., 2013: 16-18). Both schools still recruit students from relatively deprived backgrounds, but alongside a significant intake from local middle-class gentrifiers. A similar process has occurred in Telegraph Hill. Students in a focus group at Central FE College (Focus Group 1, Central FE College) who lived in the Telegraph Hill area described Hatcham College as 'really middle-class' with a sixth form that was hard to get into. This perception of Telegraph Hill is corroborated by the Good Schools' Guide Review (2016) of the school, which notes a significant local middle-class intake. The school was also classified as 'overlapping' in chapter six, indicating that the school sends significant numbers of students to Russell Group and post-1992 institutions. Whilst Butler and Robson reported the middle-class gentrifier enclave in Telegraph Hill to have focussed on the primary school with some parents sending their children elsewhere afterward, 13 years later the situation may now be changing. Banded admissions were initially seen as making the school less 'local' (Butler and Robson, 2003c: 16), but whilst the school recruited students living over 2.5km away in 2005 (Powell-Davies, 2007), since 2013 no student has lived further than 996m from the school and most have lived far closer (Hatcham Aske's College, 2016). Furthermore, changes to admissions in 2016 mean the school will cease to recruit an intake banded by attainment and will simply use distance, likely to make the intake increasingly

'local'. This trend suggests how this enclave has become more entrenched, with the local secondary school increasingly focussing its intake on the local area.

The difficulty in accessing the school at post-16 discussed in interviews reflects a crucial element in understanding how social reproduction works in 'comprehensive' schools/academies with a significant, but perhaps not totally dominant, middle-class intake. This situation bears strong parallels with Kulz's (2013) detailed ethnographic study of Mossbourne Academy. Kulz (2013: 248-249) describes a racialized and classed form of de facto selection and exclusion at 16 with the cumulative effects of race- and class-differentiated discipline contributing to the filtering-out of black working class students who are pushed out and towards the local sixth form college. This process was strengthened by only offering students a place in sixth form to study unpopular A-level subjects. In contrast to these rejected students, the number of external students rose steadily between 2009 and 2012, suggesting growing esteem for the sixth form. The gentrifier presence now extends from primary school enclaves right up into the sixth form, which acts as a further filter, ensures that there are insulated local middle-class 'continuity' circuits running right through the local primary school, into the sixth form and on to a prestigious universities. These strategies whilst taking a specific form in inner-London gentrifier neighbourhoods, occur nationally across urban school systems and an examination of this in greater depth will follow in chapter six.

2.7 Conclusions

This chapter provided an explicitly spatial history of elite and middle-class education in England. Whilst there has been a burgeoning of research in recent years on the geography of education (Butler and Hamnett, 2007; Thiem, 2009; Holloway et al., 2011; McCreary et al., 2013), this has largely avoided situating contemporary experiences historically within local and especially regional histories of class, wealth and educational power. Using a Bourdieusian framing of institutional field alongside the concept of circuits of education, this thesis takes the field of education at post-16 and the transition into university as its empirical-theoretical focus. These fields are analysed at both local and regional scales to explore how middle-class and elite patterns of social reproduction are changing.

As discussed above, the central regional division in elite and middle-class education in England is between London and the ROSE, and the rest of the country. In attempting to analyse the field of education, this will form the key focus of my first empirical chapter (chapter four) to which the first set of research questions below relate. The main dimension through which this will be examined will be in access to elite universities, in particular looking at the spatial distribution of Oxbridge participation. Winning places at prestigious institutions acts as a form of symbolic capital within local and national fields, and is used here to examine the structure of the field of schooling at the post-16 stage. Circuits of education when they form repeated trajectories connecting certain schools and universities, accumulate and sediment themselves as symbolic capital to the schools in question. This process of accumulation is also geographically relative with concentrations at the local level between schools in a local authority, but also at the regional scale. It is at this higher-level scale that we can see the geographical bias of the dominant sub-field of elite schools within England. This is where we can see the persistence, but also the mutations, within the nexus of elite educational power connecting the schools of London/the ROSE with the universities of the 'golden triangle'. In chapter four, I will also examine data on private school intakes and participation to examine Rubinstein's theory of the dualism of England's middle classes between the South-East and the rest of the country. I follow this with an analysis of the specific fields of post-16 education in London and Sheffield in terms of how institutions operate as nodes in serving as conduits to particular universities. The key dimension of difference is not only the scale of the private sector, but the presence of elite 'super-state' schools which compete much more closely with London's private schools than do Sheffield's high-performing suburban comprehensives. This distinction between an elite state sector specific to London and suburban middle-class comprehensives found in Sheffield, London and elsewhere suggest new geographical fractures in patterns of middle-class and elite social reproduction.

This distinction structures the final two empirical chapters (five and six), which examine how local urban and educational histories have created distinctive hierarchies of schools not only over the last 30-35 years but also since the late 19th century. Since the early 1990s these schools, have begun to challenge private schools on attainment and, to varying degrees, on Oxbridge and Russell Group participation too. I refer to several schools drawing on fieldwork and statistical analysis, giving particular attention to an Outer London boys grammar school, 'King Henry's VIII Boys Grammar' which has seen its intake transformed at the same time as it reverted from comprehensive to grammar status. In the final empirical chapter (chapter six)

I examine the role of suburban comprehensives in Sheffield and London, with their function as schools which do not currently compete with the private sector as London's 'super-state' schools are able to. However, through the operation of specific local middle-class strategies of colonisation, a common national pattern of local middle-class continuity circuits are evident. These represent a clear historical strand of continuity with the practices of the middle classes in the post-war period. But even within this more national pattern, there are clear metropolitan biases. London's housing market will likely distort access to and reinforce segregation at these schools, even to the exclusion of certain less well-paid 'middle-class' professionals suggesting further divisions between the 'middle class' in London and without.

Returning to the original work on circuits of schooling (Ball et al., 1995), the separate B and C circuits (cosmopolitan middle-class circuits and independent day school circuits) are merging within London with the rise of new 'super-state' schools. In contrast, the institutional field and associated circuits in Sheffield have not seen the same rise of an elite sub-group of state schools, with the long-dominant schools of the suburban south-west of the city continuing to be the primary mode of middle-class reproduction. This distinction between the elite state and private schools of London and its hinterland and to a certain extent the elite state grammars of Manchester and Birmingham,³⁰ is also maintained with at best partial exceptions which will be referred to throughout the following analysis. The study which I outline here is thus a spatial analysis of how middle-class circuits of education operate nationally within particular institutional fields of education. An analysis of the contemporary field of institutions and how this hierarchy has been shaped by particular historical geographies of class and education nationally, and then within London and Sheffield forms the key focus of chapter four and the first research questions outlined below. Chapters five and six take this mode of analysis down to the local-neighbourhood scale to examine specific contemporary circuits and institutional-neighbourhood histories. This first examines those circuits and institutional forms associated with London's 'super-state' schools (chapter five), corresponding to the second set of research questions outlined below. I then (chapter six) examine the circuits associated with the apparently national pattern of the suburban middle-class comprehensive with the distinctive role of the sixth form within 'local middle-class continuity circuits'. Even here, particular dynamics of class and housing ensure there is a distinctive difference between London and the rest. In the next chapter I will discuss the methodology and research design relating to the choice of case study schools and the

³⁰ The distinctions between Sheffield and other provincial cities will be discussed in chapter three.

broader decision over Sheffield and London. My research questions are listed after an introduction describing the structure of the chapter.

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3. Methodology: analysing schooling and class across space and time

3.1. Introduction

The methodological approach developed to answer the research questions which I list below is complex and multi-level. In what is an ambitious attempt at a comparison of schooling across two cities, over time and between different individual schools and neighbourhoods, using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, there is inevitably a need to carefully consider the methods used and the claims that can be made. In this chapter I seek to contextualise the processes of case selection, data collection and methods of analysis within an overall framing which draws on the rich traditions of comparative social science. The comparison I outline is relational – seeing institutional hierarchies at the post-16 stage within different cities as formed through circuits of education, schools in particular neighbourhoods as developing their position over time, and cities within nationally dominated or dominant regions developing educational hierarchies which reflect these positions and the distinctive geographies of class and ethnicity. Adding a further layer of complexity to all of this is the need to see contemporary patterns as the outcome of historical processes, not to include history as ‘the dull little padding known as “sketching in the historical background,”’ (Mills, 2000: 154) but to see history as *essential* to understanding the contemporary sociology and geography of educational power. This means understanding the historical development of institutions, conflicts over housing, forms of educational culture, the circuits which develop between particular neighbourhoods and schools and between schools or colleges and universities; after all, the ‘social world is accumulated history’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 241) and the move that is made here is towards a reading of how these accumulations of cultural, social, economic and symbolic capital continue to shape the contemporary field of education. These slow accumulations shape institutional positions and their role in (re)producing particular patterns of class formation at both a local, neighbourhood level, the meso-scale of the city and the macro-scale of the region/country. This move is timely, with Piketty’s (2014) analysis suggesting according to Savage (2014: 598) that ‘we are now seeing the reassertion of older structures’ of income inequality. Moreover, at the same moment, we are witnessing a particular ‘circularity’ (Ball, 2012: 89) within education policy, which seems to be restoring the institutional framework of the early educational state established precisely during the ‘Belle Époque’ years of late 19th century inequality Piketty refers to. Combining an understanding of how the past continues to re-assert itself within the contemporary

geography of educational inequality at neighbourhood, city and regional scales is, however, a challenging venture. The approach involves multiple levels and scales (both social and spatial) of analysis and multiple methods – the triangulation of student and teacher perspectives, the analysis of large datasets and the embedding of these social science techniques within a historical reading of contemporary change.

I begin this chapter (section 3.2) by listing the research questions and providing a brief summary of how they shape the research design and the chapters which follow. I return to the research questions at the end of the chapter and show how the methods I outline below are used to analyse the questions listed. I then describe the theoretical approach underpinning a comparison of post-16 education across two cities, Sheffield and London, as well as between different English regions (Section 3.3). Relational comparison is the central epistemological research strategy underpinning this research and I thus draw on debates from both comparative urbanism (Ward, 2010) and broader discussions of comparative social science (Tilly, 1984). Within this section I also justify the historical approach taken here, referring in particular to Lacey's (1970) work who suggests how earlier sociologies of education explored the effect of local histories of education, social structure and the local economy on schools and communities in the present. Following this theoretical framework, I begin to describe the research strategy undertaken, beginning with the selection of cases (Section 3.4). I first describe why London is compared to Sheffield and then discuss why and how each school was selected. Section 3.5 discusses the triangulation of methods before (3.5.1) describes the qualitative methods used in each school with a discussion of focus group methods in particular. A final sub-section (3.5.2) describes the use of quantitative data to provide a relational understanding of institutional hierarchy within local urban fields of education at the post-16 stage and between different English regions. The chapter concludes by describing how the methods are used in the following empirical chapters and by arguing for a methodological approach to contemporary sociologies and geographies of education which is sensitive to history.

3.2. Research questions

1. How is the field of schools and colleges structured nationally and within each case study area and how do these institutional hierarchies fit into local and national structural histories of middle-class and elite education?
 - a. What is the spatial form of the field of post-16 institutions in terms of access to elite universities in England?
 - b. What does the geography of private school participation and intakes over the last decade tell us about the spatial divisions in middle-class patterns of social reproduction through the school system? How does this fit into historical debates around the historical 'dualism' between the more affluent middle classes of London and the South-East and those in the rest of the country?
 - c. What circuits of education exist at the end of post-16 in London and Sheffield and how do these circuits connecting particular schools and universities shape the local hierarchy of schools? Are there specific circuits of education and forms of institutional hierarchy which occur only in a metropolitan context?
2. What are the circuits of education found in London's 'super-state' schools and how do they overlap culturally and academically with the private sector?
 - a. How did these schools come to achieve their position within the field of London's elite schools which is dominated by institutions of the private sector? How have they constructed their position and reputation?
 - b. Are the urban processes and institutional changes involved in forming this elite subset of state schools specific to a metropolitan context?
 - c. How have processes of ethnic-minority suburbanisation become associated with particular circuits of education flowing into grammar schools?
3. Do suburban comprehensives and middle-class enclaves surrounding them form national patterns of suburban middle-class social reproduction through schooling?
 - a. How is the conventional middle-class strategy of clustering in the catchment areas of suburban schools different in London and Sheffield? Are there common circuits of education which exist across different cities?

- b. What impact does this have on the institutional status of schools in both areas?
- c. What is the role of the housing market in each case?
- d. Are there any distinctive differences in HE destinations in the two cities? In particular, what is the balance between post-1992 and Russell Group HE progression across the two case studies?
- e. What do these differences indicate about differences in patterns of social reproduction and the nature of the 'middle classes' in a small provincial city versus metropolitan London?

The empirical chapters which follow seek to disaggregate urban patterns of middle-class social reproduction across provincial cities in contrast with London whilst providing a broader analysis of the geographical field of education across England at the post-16 stage. The research strategy adopted here seeks to place the former in the context of the latter so that the structure of the empirical chapters which follow first establishes the national context and structure of the field of schooling in England (corresponding to question one) in terms of access to elite forms of HE, before examining the specificities of local fields and how particular historical trajectories of institutions mesh with circuits of education in London and Sheffield (questions two and three). At the end of the chapter I describe how the methods and data outlined correspond to the research questions and structure each chapter. Before describing the methods of data collection and analysis in detail, I first describe the theoretical approach to comparative social science taken here.

3.3. Comparing cities and education over time and through space: a theoretical approach

Understanding how contemporary circuits of education and institutional field positions vary across and within cities and regions as well as over time requires careful theoretical consideration. In line with how both institutional hierarchies and the development of regional inequalities were analysed in the previous chapter, I draw on Ward's (2010) suggestion of the need for a relational approach to comparative urban research. Ward (2010: 480) argues for the need to understand 'the territorial and the relational histories and geographies that

are behind their production and (re)production.’ Despite the diverse moves over the past decade towards relational approaches to urban geography (Jacobs, 2012: 412), it is arguably the case that urban comparison has long included forms of relational analyses, some of which have also been historical. Smith’s (1982b: xviii-xix) analysis of Birmingham and Sheffield mentioned above, described how ‘each city is analysed in terms of its location within a hierarchy of mutually related levels of structural differentiation ranging from the domestic to the national level’ with patterns of class formation shaped by these overlapping interactions of social relations operating at different scales. The comparisons used here are, as I will examine in the following paragraphs, multi-level, moving between the macro national/regional scale, the meso-level structure of fields of education of particular cities or boroughs and the local, neighbourhood-school scale contrasting individual case studies of particular schools and their associated circuits of education. In combining multiple scales of comparison, it draws both on a relational comparative urbanism (Ward, 2010; Jacobs, 2012), the strong traditions in comparative education which have also insisted on the importance of multilevel comparison (Bray and Thomas, 1995; Bray et al., 2014) and calls for a geography of education to operate across different spatial scales and ultimately to combine an analysis of the social structuring of education across space and time (Marsden, 1987: 2; Taylor, 2009: 662-664).

This relational perspective over several different geographical scales is central to how comparative analysis is approached here. The aim is not simply to compare Sheffield and London but to situate this within an understanding of broader regional geographies of education and examine how fields of education work at a local level; the comparisons are multi-layered and relational in a deep sense. This approach takes something from Tilly’s (1984: 82-83) description of ‘encompassing comparison’ in which different sites, here schools and particular circuits, are situated in relation to how the system works at a macro scale. Here my analysis works similarly, first establishing the macro-level structure of the field of education at post-16 nationally, and then analysing the ‘meso’-level hierarchies within Sheffield and London specifically, to provide ‘a mental map of the whole system’ (Tilly, 1984: 125). I then use these analyses of the national/regional and city-level fields of education at the post-16 to university transition to situate the case studies which follow. A relational form of comparison is used in chapter four first at the national and regional scale, comparing the geography of entry to Oxbridge and the geography of private schooling in order to analyse regional differences in patterns of elite and middle-class social reproduction. Part two of chapter four moves to understand the field positions of schools across the two cities, using a

SNA of school to university circuits. This particular method reveals a hierarchy of schools and universities through the relations, i.e. circuits of education, linking particular schools and universities. In the following two chapters, the comparisons operate *within* the sub-field of London's elite state schools, comparing schools and circuits within the sub-regional education market (Butler and Hamnett, 2011: 179) of North London,³¹ and across suburban comprehensives in Sheffield and London.

At each spatial scale of analysis, care is taken to interpret contemporary patterns in light of specific educational, regional and urban histories. Ward's emphasis on the importance of 'relational histories and geographies' being interpreted together is particularly useful in this regard. The historical and spatial comparison that is attempted here, *begins*, or perhaps renews (Grace, 1984b: 36-37), a move towards a broader historical analysis of how educational power, in the form of symbolic, cultural and, for certain schools, economic capital, accumulates within institutions and neighbourhoods at a local and a regional scale. In developing or renewing a spatially-aware historical sociology of educational power, or conversely, a sociologically-driven historical geography of educational power, it is necessary to think through how circuits and institutional positions form *cumulatively*, and, with certain caveats, Arthur Stinchcombe's analysis is theoretically fruitful:

How then can we use detailed historical studies to explain why a large number of variables, from the proportion of rents of productive property in property income to literacy rates, cumulate over five centuries? **Which causal processes are inherently cumulative and cause the cumulation of the rest? [...] the first step is to construct for particular cumulative processes [...] a theory that is causally adequate to the cumulation.** In order to speak to the epochal question at all, the theory has to be of a form that explains the systematic evolution of institutions over reasonably large segments of time.

(My emphasis: Stinchcombe: 12)

The historical approach taken here sees these patterns of accumulation, primarily focusing on symbolic and cultural capital, as being formative of elite educational institutions and their position within the field of post-16 education. I understand symbolic capital primarily as being indicated by places won at Oxbridge, though this is clearly not the only possible or an ideal

³¹Comparing London and Sheffield is complicated, as London is both effectively a region in and of itself but is included in the "meso"-comparison of fields of education. The highly distinctive sub-field of elite schools which will be examined in chapter four, certainly operate across the whole city, competing with each other on sport, Oxbridge places and A-level results. In practice, however, I focus primarily on the North London sub-regional hierarchy of London schools; I show how particular sub-regional divisions of London's field of schooling can be quantitatively delineated in Appendix G.

measure. With cultural capital I refer to particular 'gentlemanly' elite sporting practices associated with elite male education, and particular selective academic practices associated with the sixth form. The latter are harder to classify as a form of capital but certainly result in the cumulative production of reputations as high-performing academic sixth forms. The importance of processes of accumulation of prestige and cultural value works both for schools that are nationally elite, woven firmly into the broader fabric of elite HE and social reproduction, and for those that are locally dominant or 'elite' within their own local fields but are not part of the elite sub-field of institutions nationally. These accumulations do not inevitably lead to success, nor are they necessarily linear, but taking this historical lens both over the very long-term (100-150 years) and the more recent past (30-50 years) we can understand how certain institutions become locally or nationally dominant or 'successful' and how certain circuits of education develop. There is the scope here for a broader historical sociology and geography of educational power which this thesis only begins to point towards.³² However, I am not interested here in producing a grand, 'epochal' theory, at the cost of obscuring the construction of patterns and structures through individual experience at the micro-level. Attention to circuits of education in particular, shows how individual choices and trajectories form collective patterns which operate in the first instance at the scale of particular neighbourhoods and schools but are also regionally and nationally patterned.

The risk in comparison which takes a broader historical angle is that the 'uniqueness and complexities' of individual cases are lost (Stake, 2000: 444) and it is undoubtedly true that aspects of students' stories and individual schools are not attended to in the same depth as they might be. For example it was simply not possible to provide the detailed historical analysis of the trajectory of a school, as Lacey (1970) did with his description of Hightown Grammar's transition from a 'finishing school' to a 'professionalising school' between 1900 and 1965. His use of data showing the social class and destinations of students over a sixty year period is a remarkably powerful approach to understanding how contemporary sociologies of educational institutions are underpinned by slow, cumulative processes of

³² The role of (economic) capital accumulation by elite, mostly now independent schools, and how these endowments have developed since the late 19th century has not received much scholarly attention. One notable exception is in Roach's (1991) history of secondary schooling between 1870 and 1902, a work which is conscious of geography, noting the great incomes of the 'Hospital' foundations (often schools) of Bristol, Edinburgh and London (Roach, 1991: 45). In Appendix A, I provide an initial discussion of how these historical endowments have combined with local class structures and patterns of regional economic development to create a distinctive contemporary geography of social reproduction for the middle classes, with certain schools more financially stable than others.

establishing academic prestige and both the school and parents responding to local forms of structural economic change. Taking up this approach again would provide a powerful analysis of recent educational change and would fit with a broader move towards a historical sociology of contemporary educational power and social reproduction. Excluding the 19th century commissions on schooling (Clarendon Commission, 1864a; 1864b; 1864c; Schools' Inquiry Commission, 1868; Bryce Commission, 1895; Public Schools Commission, 1968; Donnison, 1970a), and the educational reports included in Booth's (1892) and Smith's (1930) London surveys, the historical analysis undertaken here is primarily through an analysis of secondary sources, particularly drawing on school histories. In addition to this secondary material, I also draw on interviews with local teachers who had been working at the schools included in the study since the early 1980s, sometimes having attended local schools themselves in the 1960s or 1970s. This allows some of the advantages of oral history in allowing a greater understanding of the 'real life experience' (Samuel, 1976: 201) of local educational life. What was particularly important to this study was how interviews with senior staff at both King Henry's School and Valley Hills School allowed a subjective perspective on how both schools slowly built up their reputation. These individual perspectives help to respond to Stake's (2000) argument that the comparative method is 'a grand epistemological strategy [...] fixing attention on one or a few aspects. It obscures case knowledge that fails to facilitate comparison'. Comparative methods aiming to integrate micro and macro scales of analysis might respond with the 'blunt assertion' that separating the two is impossible (Fielding and Fielding, 1986: 20). Moreover, seeking to traverse the micro/macro division of social analysis has been central to Bourdieu's (1981; 1981) sociological approach.

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007: 28) neatly summarise this debate as the "better stories vs better theories" argument and suggest that a route out of this dilemma is to develop a theory in stages so that the contextual data of each case forms a section of the broader theoretical argument. As I noted above, my first empirical chapter (chapter four) provides a broad 'mental map of the whole system' in Tilly's words, describing the structure of the field of post-16 nationally, highlighting the specificity of private schooling in the South-East and then examining the two fields of London and Sheffield in greater depth. Chapters five and six seek to differentiate between the circuits and field positions of, firstly of London's super-state schools, which reflect particular educational and urban histories as well as distinctive metropolitan patterns of class formation, and then the middle-class circuits of education in suburban comprehensive schools. These latter chapters provide greater depth on the individual school cases which I describe below and suggest the broad lines of division

between hierarchies of schooling and patterns of elite and middle-class circuits of education in London as opposed to Sheffield and other provincial cities. However, these 'better stories' are not limited to the final two chapters with description of private school conversions to free school status providing further qualitative evidence of the broader regional divisions in middle-class social reproduction through education. Having described the importance of a historical approach and the justification of a relational form of comparative urban and regional analysis I now show my research design and case selection. I begin with the decision to compare Sheffield and London before moving to focus on case selection at the school-neighbourhood scale.

3.4. Research design: case selection

3.4.1. Choosing cities: Sheffield as a provincial contrast to London's field of schooling

In selecting Sheffield as a provincial counter-point to London, my initial intention was to extend and deepen the comparison made by Bridge (2006a) when he contrasted the schooling options available to gentrifiers in Bristol versus those in Butler and Robson's (2003a) study of inner London gentrifiers. He suggested that for 'cities lower down the urban hierarchy' (Bridge, 2006a: 1978) the conventional middle-class move to the suburbs to ensure a smooth process of social reproduction through suburban comprehensives was the norm. Studying Sheffield seemed to offer a means to deepen this comparison of middle-class strategies and how they contributed to forming circuits of education specific to smaller provincial cities. In particular, Sheffield provided an example of a city which, like Leeds, Manchester and Newcastle (Dutton, 2003; Rousseau, 2009; Lees et al., 2013: 145) had experienced state-led, albeit through public-private partnerships and quangos, gentrification of the city-centre from the early 1990s and especially from the early 2000s, but had not experienced successful 'classic' pioneer-led gentrification present in London (Lees et al., 2013: 10-19) and to a lesser extent in Bristol (Bridge, 2003) and Edinburgh (Bondi, 1999). As in Bristol, there were certainly predominantly working-class and sometimes also ethnically-mixed neighbourhoods which had a significant middle-class presence, though these were perhaps more often lower professionals (NS-SEC 2), primarily working in the public sector, rather than the higher professional and managerial middle-class (NS-SEC 1.1/1,2) who are strongly concentrated in Sheffield's most affluent southern suburbs (UK Data Explorer, 2012). Whether this presence of middle-class professionals in the North side of Sheffield amounted to provincial forms of 'classic' gentrification in the Sheffield context remains a

moot point and is not one I seek to answer here. However, I knew from personal experience that the outward suburban trajectory of middle-class parents at the point of secondary school choice was also well-established in Sheffield, suggesting similarities with Bridge's findings about the limits of middle-class residential practices of buying housing in working-class neighbourhoods outside London.

My own background is as the child of middle-class professionals who lived, until I was 10, on the less affluent, northern side of the city. Pitsmoor-Burngreave, where we lived, was originally a relatively well-heeled Victorian suburb on the North side of Sheffield which became a key focus for post-war migration from the Commonwealth with large populations from the Caribbean, Pakistan (particularly Kashmir), Yemen and later Somalia (Taylor et al., 1996: 199-200). Both my parents were white-British, middle-class professionals in the health service and within that, belonged to a distinct new-left/political fraction many of whom worked in the welfare state, had moved into the area over the 1980s and stayed once they had children.³³ The local secondary school was Earl Marshall led by communist educator Chris Searle (1997) until his removal by the local authority under disputed circumstances in 1995, the school went into a period of 'decline' and was closed and re-opened as Fir Vale School in 1998, the year before I began secondary school. A sudden conversion to Catholicism in order to use the city's two Catholic schools being impossible for my atheist Jewish and Quaker parents and private schooling politically unpalatable, the "only" option was to move to the suburbs of southwestern Sheffield and the schools which had retained their sixth forms, and their local position of symbolic and cultural power, in the 1980s as will be examined in chapter six. There were other factors in this re-location – size of the house for three children, a desire to be closer to the countryside and friends, but fundamentally this was about class and ethnicity or rather how assumptions about class and ethnicity were embedded in both my parents' and the state's assumptions about how this would affect my experience of the local school. My parents were not alone, six other families within our extended social circle made the same move at around the same time, though others did stay and either used the appeals system or for financial or, in some cases, political reasons sent their children to Fir Vale. Rather than simply suggesting that provincial middle-class residential strategies in working-class neighbourhoods did not survive decisions about schooling as they did in London's gentrifier enclaves, it also suggested something particular about the urban hierarchy of schools in Sheffield and perhaps in provincial cities more

³³ I think I only truly began to understand the political motivations of the particular cultural and social milieu I grew up in after borrowing *In and Against the State* (Mitchell et al., 1980) from my uncle (a public health doctor responsible for rolling out the 'healthy bacon sandwich' amongst Barnsley bus drivers) in the final year of my undergraduate degree.

broadly.

The trajectory of re-locating to the suburban South-West in Sheffield at the point of entry to secondary education, certainly supports Bridge's (2003; 2006a; 2007) analysis of school strategies and the differentiation of provincial middle-class housing practices (whether in Sheffield this amounted to gentrification is less clear). However, from another perspective it also revealed the persistence of a suburban hierarchy of schooling which is itself the outcome of earlier class conflicts over schooling and housing in Sheffield. It is the distinctiveness of how institutional hierarchies combine with and reflect particular histories of provincial and metropolitan patterns of class formation which gradually became the key focus here and justify the comparison. What was clear to me was how this spatial re-location of middle-class families across the city was the embodiment of a particular institutional hierarchy of schools meshed with a historical residential, classed and ethnic divide between the affluent suburban constituency of Sheffield Hallam and the rest of the city. Before comprehensivisation in the late 1960s, all but one of the city's grammar schools were located in the South-West of the city meaning that for hundreds of often working-class students one or more bus trips across the city to the suburban grammars was a daily norm (King Edward VII School, 1995; Cook, 2005; Sheffield Forum, 2012). These journeys are in many ways paralleled today with students from the working-class North and East of the city making the same journeys to attend the more academically selective and high-attaining suburban comprehensives which retain their sixth forms. The sharp residential divide between the affluent South-West, largely co-terminous with Nick Clegg's Sheffield Hallam constituency, and the rest of the city (Thomas et al., 2009; Binfield, 1993), has central to shaping the urban politics of education of Sheffield with the Labour council losing their battle to abolish school sixth forms across the city in the 1980s. I discuss this conflict in greater depth in chapter six to show how contemporary circuits are the result of particular conflicts over urban and educational space.

Whilst grammar schools no longer exist in Sheffield, the preservation of school sixth forms in the South-West and whilst the North and East primarily operate an 11-16 schools and FE or Sixth Form College system, has meant that hundreds of students continue to make this bus journey to the South-West of the city, albeit at age 16 rather than age 11. In my master's thesis I noted the similarities between these journeys and suggested (Gamsu, 2012: 80) that a 'comparative historical sociology of socio-spatial educational trajectories' provided a rich

vein for future research. In many ways this thesis is the outcome of that assertion, although greater weight is placed on understanding the historical and contemporary development of Sheffield's institutional field of schooling rather than the history and repetition of these North/East to South-West circuits. Methodologically this has meant slightly shifting the justification for studying schooling in London and Sheffield comparatively. Instead of an analysis centred on examining the role of gentrification in provincial and metropolitan contexts, the focus shifted to examine how different contemporary institutional hierarchies, or fields, of education at the post-16 phase reflected particular histories of locally and regionally differentiated class structures. Furthermore, the decisive role of the suburban comprehensive in Sheffield's hierarchy of schools suggested a further line of provincial-metropolitan comparison, namely whether and how particular circuits form in suburban comprehensives which are perhaps *nationally* patterned rather than exclusive to Bristol, Sheffield or London.

Selecting Sheffield as a counter-point to London thus became a question of choosing a city with a particular 'provincial', field of schooling, with a hierarchy of institutions less complex and less polarised than that found in the capital. Each city's 'local' field of institutions is also the historical legacy of particular distinctive urban and regional economic, social and political histories. Through this lens, the choice of Sheffield takes on a different meaning. As I argued in the previous chapter, London's field of schooling is the result of the city's historical role as the political, cultural and economic centre of England. Despite the complexities and limits of geological metaphors (Warde, 1985), circuits of education and institutional position are formed cumulatively, layered over time and meshed with particular regional and local structures of class and politics of education. Circuits of education which develop between particular schools and universities with dominant or dominated positions take time to accumulate into distinct patterns of symbolic capital, markers of institutional prestige for the schools in question. Developing a dominant position within the field of post-16 *nationally* means competing with elite private schools that have developed and maintained 'symbiotic' relationships with Oxbridge over the last 150 years or more in some cases. Outside the South-East and the South more broadly, schools of this ilk are rarer, particularly in the large cities.

Of the large provincial cities, only Trafford in Greater Manchester and Birmingham have retained substantial grammar school models³⁴ with more than one school. Greater Manchester and Birmingham, as well as having retained grammar schools in certain areas, also have stand-out private schools which, as will be seen below, again compete nationally within the sub-field of elite schools. In both cases however, only Altrincham Grammar in Trafford and King Edward VI Camp Hill School in Birmingham come close to the attainment and Oxbridge participation of London's 'super-state' grammars which will be examined in the following chapter. England's two major 'second rank' cities thus both have local fields of education at post-16 which are closer to the capital than those found in most other provincial cities, though this comparison is complex. Smith's (1982b: 208-235) comparative study of patterns of class formation and conflict in Birmingham and Sheffield between 1830 and 1914, focusses in particular on the role of education. He argued that a liberal classical education was more firmly embedded in Birmingham's grammar schools than in Sheffield, as a result of the larger white-collar professional population and the much larger financial endowments of the King Edward VI Foundation Schools in Birmingham compared to Sheffield's far poorer grammars.³⁵ The continuing economic success of the Foundation that supports Birmingham's grammars and the two main independent schools, with a capital endowment now worth £125.9 million in 2014-15 (The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham, 2015: 25), has ensured that Birmingham's field of schooling is unusual compared to most provincial cities.³⁶ Selecting Sheffield as a contrast to London is arguably more representative of smaller provincial cities where selective and fee-paying schools are largely absent and even when they are, they largely do not approximate the nationally dominant schools of the South-East in the way that schools in Manchester and Birmingham tend to. For many provincial cities and towns, a flatter hierarchy of schooling is more common, with suburban comprehensives and sometimes certain faith schools being academically prestigious locally, with the city supporting perhaps two or three large private schools of around 600-1000 students with sixth forms. It is worth briefly dwelling on how these school hierarchies mesh with particular demographic data and how this affects a comparative urban study of schooling in English cities.

³⁴ Liverpool's Blue Coat School is more akin to the model of certain London boroughs (e.g. Enfield) as a stand-alone grammar school which has long sat outside LEA governance structures.

³⁵ All the endowed Sheffield grammar schools of the late 19th century would either close or be taken over by the state sector.

³⁶ Though with a non-educational focus, Taylor *et al.* (1996) also highlight how Manchester now seeks to fulfil the cultural and economic role of London in the North of England. Their study of the 'structure of local feeling' in Manchester and Sheffield, also flags how there has always been 'a powerful recognition in Sheffield that Manchester is a big place' (Taylor *et al.*, 1996: 28-29). Similarly, Savage *et al.* (2005: 24) noted Manchester's positioning itself as 'a major European city, second only to London in England'.

Certain other provincial cities also have large or important private schools. Bristol is unusual compared to most other cities of its size in having a much larger private sector (see Appendix A for a discussion of Bristol's private schools). As in York, this is combined with a slightly larger professional and managerial middle class than in most provincial cities, Bristol's role as a provincial financial services centre is also likely to be important here (Leyshon et al., 1989). Sheffield is closer to most other provincial cities outside the South-East in having under 30% of its population in Higher (NS-SEC 1) and Lower (NS-SEC 2) managerial, professional and administrative occupations (Office for National Statistics, 2011b).³⁷ In terms of ethnicity Sheffield is also closer to the slightly smaller third-tier provincial cities (Newcastle upon Tyne, Leeds, Bristol and Cardiff) in having just over 80% of its population white British (Office for National Statistics, 2011a). Manchester (the borough), Birmingham, Bradford and Leicester are all much closer to London boroughs on this note, which has particular implications for suburban circuits of education found in the grammar schools of Manchester, Birmingham and the capital as we will see in chapter four. These factors which shape the landscape of education and the socio-spatial patterns of social reproduction through schooling, do indicate how Sheffield is typical not of the 'second tier' aspiring global city of Manchester (Savage et al., 2005: 25) but of the smaller provincial cities. Whilst there is undoubtedly a North-South divide (Dorling, 2008; Dorling and Hennig, 2016), this broad spatial socio-economic division is strewn with exceptions and ethnicity more generally does not easily fit this division. Nevertheless in educational terms, Sheffield's field of schooling is perhaps closer to the norm for many provincial cities and is certainly very distant from those London boroughs and parts of the Home Counties which are dominated by the professional-managerial middle class. Having described the decision to compare schools in Sheffield and London, I now justify the selection of schools I focus on in chapters five and six before describing the qualitative and quantitative data and the methods used in greater depth.

³⁷ Bristol has 12% of its population in NS-SEC 1 and 20% in NS-SEC 2, York has 12% and 21% respectively. For contrast, Leeds has 9% and 20%, Bradford 8% and 17% and Sheffield 9% and 18%, Newcastle upon Tyne 9% and 16%, the borough of Manchester 9% and 16%. These figures are very rough forms of comparison, particularly in the case of Manchester as in the (now obsolete) Metropolitan County boroughs there is some significant variation, particularly in Greater Manchester with Stockport and Trafford notably more affluent. Unsurprisingly it is urban and rural local authority areas across London and the South-East that have the highest percentages of population in NS-SEC 1 and 2.

3.4.2. Choosing schools: London's super-state schools and the suburban comprehensives

The schools which are included here are the two comprehensives in suburban, affluent and predominantly white middle-class neighbourhoods in Sheffield and London, and the elite Outer London boys' grammar school, 'King Henry's School' (KHS). KHS is one of the highest attaining state schools for the country and is consistently ranked as one of the top 30 schools (including independents), and generally *the* top state school, for the percentage of students attending Oxbridge. This kind of hyper-selective, high-performing elite state school was entirely absent from Sheffield, making the school what could be understood in Flyvbjerg's (2004: 427) terms as a 'paradigmatic case', an extreme case operating as an exemplar for the phenomenon of London's 'super-state' schools. The word 'paradigmatic' could be seen to exaggerate the extent of the claims made here, but it is certainly true that KHS provides an exemplary case of an elite state school operating within the capital. Its success is emblematic of how shifts in education policy, changes within the school and the exceptional processes of social class and ethnic change occurring in London, have combined to create a sub-set of elite state schools which compete with the private sector. It is contrasted to two schools the Camden School for Girls (CSG) and Henrietta Barnett School (HBS) which are examined in less detail.³⁸ These two additional schools are used to show the different positions of 'super-state' schools *within* the sub-field of London's elite schools, as well as contrasting the distinctive patterns of circuits feeding each of the 'super-state' schools indicated by the network analysis of chapter four. Taken as a whole this analysis seeks to highlight the types of circuits and processes of urban and educational change that are associated with the rise of the elite state schools identified by the SNA seen in chapter four.

In contrast, the two suburban schools, Valley Hills in Sheffield and Woodtham Park in North London, are used to examine how circuits of education associated with suburban middle-class dominated comprehensives are both similar and different across metropolitan and

³⁸ The level of detail is not on a par with KHS where I spent five days interviewing, as it was not possible to gain access to the schools. Instead, my analysis of these schools relies on interviews with two former students, use of the NPD and analysis of school histories and websites.

provincial fields of education. The aim here is to suggest how similar patterns and strategies of middle-class families in the suburbs have developed historically in ways which traverse the many variations of different cities. I focus on how similar strategies and patterns have developed at both schools, arguing that despite the different contexts they represent a similar circuit of education which has been historically constructed since comprehensivisation in the 1970s. A notable difference is the lack of an additional layer of elite state schools in Sheffield, a difference which is examined particularly in relation to HE destinations, thus extending the analysis in chapter four. This long-term historical contextualisation seeks to draw out similarities but also highlight differences. A historical analysis also unpicks the deeper urban and educational roots of Sheffield's provincial hierarchy of institutions, formed through long-simmering conflicts and tensions over housing and education. Cost of housing is also used to flag a key dimension of provincial-metropolitan differentiation in these suburban circuits of education, with an analysis of house price data combined with earnings data for different occupational groups (Office for National Statistics, 2015; Land Registry, 2016) providing estimates of the cost of buying into the catchment of each school depending on occupation. This suggests how broader geographical fractures in England's socio-occupational structure are linked to spatial variation in housing costs which are producing very different hierarchies and levels of possible segregation between schools in London and those outside the capital.

3.5. Data collection, methods and analysis

Alongside the initial aim of contrasting the effect of gentrification in provincial as opposed to metropolitan contexts, this study also began with the intention of providing an analysis of the full hierarchy of institutions at the post-16 phase at both a provincial and a metropolitan setting. The intention was in part to re-run Ball *et al.*'s (1995; 1996) original study, updating the original analysis by exploring whether the four principal circuits of schooling still existed in North London and whether they were relevant to a provincial urban field of education. Concentrating on post-16 rather than the secondary phase as well as visualising and analysing the circuits quantitatively using SNA methods, also aimed to extend the original study. The post-16 period was chosen as it provided the opportunity to interview students at an age when they could reflect on their recent trajectory through the secondary school system, as well as providing insight into their likely choice of university or post-educational trajectory. My qualitative approach, which I discuss in the following section combines focus

groups with stakeholder interviews and large-scale quantitative analysis, replicating the approach taken in an analysis of the implications of travel to college for post-16 education in London (University of Brighton and Sirius Seven Software, 2004; Watson and Church, 2009).

This methodological triangulation is frequently used with a mixed methods approach, as is the case here (Seale, 1999: 54). Mixed methods and triangulation both assume a sort of 'relativistic epistemology' in the sense that they recognize the contribution of knowledge from different sources (Fielding and Fielding, 1986: 30). Integrating these varied data, produced by different people at different times is not straight-forward (Ibid: 25-26). Triangulation and mixed methods have been criticized as being based on the naive assumption of a single reality which can be converged on through different methods (Blaikie, 1991: 125). Whilst there is a need for caution in integrating data, this type of philosophical criticism limits our ability to overcome macro/micro-levels of analysis, which is key to the approach taken here, and perhaps restricts the scope of social science research (Seale 1999: 58). Moreover, it is not clear that the epistemological divisions between quantitative and qualitative analysis are actually as clear cut as is often made out (Hammersley, 1992). Acknowledging the potential epistemological inconsistencies is necessary but this should not work to restrict the limits of social analysis; in Hammersley's (1992: 43) words, there is no 'stark choice between words and numbers, or even between precise and imprecise data.' In the section that follows, I first describe the full sample of qualitative data collected, the methods used and how the data was analysed before doing the same for my quantitative data.

3.5.1. Qualitative data collection, methods and analysis

With this initial aim of examining the full hierarchy of different institutions and variety of circuits at post-16, the qualitative research included a number of case studies which are not covered in-depth or which are absent in the chapters written up here. In total, I carried out detailed case studies of eight schools and colleges (5 in London, 3 in Sheffield) involving 4-8 focus groups in each institutions with a total of 216 students studying in post-16 in the 2013-14 academic year. This multiple case studies (Yin, 2009: 53-69) approach sought to produce a set of cases which would allow theory construction of how the hierarchy of fields of post-16 and the associated particular circuits of education varied in a provincial and a metropolitan context. For each school or college I sought, where possible, to find a comparator case across both Sheffield and London, the full sample of institutions was as follows:

London

KHS. A high-attaining boys' grammar school in Outer London with a large ethnic-minority intake. These schools are without comparison in Sheffield and thus was intended to reveal the specificities of the metropolitan field of post-16 education.

Woodtham Park School. A heavily over-subscribed suburban comprehensive on the fringes of a heavily gentrified Edwardian suburb. This school bore clear similarities to Valley Hills, though it also offered the potential to explore the contrasting effects of gentrification which were absent in the Sheffield case.

Trimington Sixth Form College. A sixth form centre established in the early 2000s as the main post-16 A-level provision for a multi-ethnic working-class area in the same North London borough as Woodtham Park. An identical sixth form college in Sheffield was targeted but declined participation. Interviews were with both BTEC and A-level students.

St Francis School. A relatively high-attaining Outer London Catholic comprehensive for boys with a large intake from the neighbouring Inner London borough. This offered the possibility to contrast the experience of commuting over a large catchment with a Catholic school in Sheffield.

Central FE College. A large multi-campus FE college in Inner London with intake from a broad range of schools. Interviewing was with students taking A-level or a combination of A-level and BTEC. This was a straight comparison with Sheffield's FE College.

Sheffield

Valley Hills School. A former secondary modern school situated in suburban South-West Sheffield with a predominantly white middle-class intake. Academically successful and now the lead school in a Multi-Academy Trust.

St Mary's School. One of two catholic schools in Sheffield. Situated on the edge of the city-centre and traditionally considered the less prestigious of the two (the other being firmly ensconced in Sheffield's south-western suburbs). Has a large catchment with a socio-economically and ethnically-mixed intake from the North and East of the city.

Sheffield College, 'Seaton' campus. One of Sheffield College's (then) four campuses. Situated in the West of the city in a former industrial area with a largely working-class and predominantly though not exclusively white intake. Interviews were primarily with A-level students and a small number of BTEC students.³⁹

³⁹ All the schools/colleges listed here are pseudonyms. The specific geography and history of schools and their catchment areas is fundamental to this research but runs counter to the prevailing educational tradition of giving pseudonyms to schools. This has been the subject of some debate (Kelly 2009; Tilley and Woodthorpe 2011) and I generally side here with those who argue that for both ethical and analytical reasons, naming research sites is preferable where possible (Nespor, 2000; Walford, 2005). To avoid any controversy however and at the behest of some schools, where I

In each post-16 institution focus groups were complemented by online research, fieldwork notes from open evenings and where possible follow-up interviews with students and with senior teachers. The difficulties of gaining access meant that the schools that were involved were often opportunistically selected. To this set of achieved case studies must be added a one-off focus group/class discussion in a North London girls' private school, four interviews with students who had studied at a North London 'super-state' and/or private school finishing in 2011-12, two interviews with former students from Sheffield's other Catholic school in the early 2000s. These were 'proxy interviews' which aimed to allow some perspective on schools that I could not otherwise gain access to. In terms of local stakeholders, in Sheffield I talked to five former teachers from a range of different Sheffield schools, who had finished teaching between 2010 and 2012, four of these teachers had also grown up and gone to school in Sheffield. In London, ten local stakeholders were interviewed including three HE/careers advisers at various school sixth forms and colleges, two widening participation workers in a national widening-participation organisation, two assistant heads at two different 'super-state' schools, a former local councillor, a sixth form college lecturer and a member of a university widening participation team who had previously worked in a sixth form college in the North-West. This very broad range of qualitative material inevitably forced selective choices, leading to the selection of schools which I have already described. The initial aim of sampling a broad range of institutions representing different hierarchical positions within the field of post-16 in Sheffield and London had the advantage of allowing an understanding of how students perceived of the hierarchies of post-16 institutions across both areas. This relational form of understanding of institutional hierarchy informed by the perspective of students and various stakeholders complemented my analysis of the NPD, and provided a rich context from which to select a sub-set of schools to focus on.

Qualitative data collection primarily took the form of focus groups, with between three to eight students. Morgan (1996a; 1996b) suggests that four to six focus groups will likely provide theoretical saturation for most projects and I aimed to include 20-30 students in four to six focus groups in each school or college. All students participating in focus groups

discuss schools/colleges where I interviewed students and teachers on site, I have anonymised the institution. For two schools discussed in chapter five interviews were with former students and/or the data either draws on publicly available resources or the NPD. These two schools, like those in the GIS and network analysis and the historical analysis of Sheffield post-16 institutions in chapter six, are named in the thesis. For the five schools that are discussed in some detail, I describe their context and the focus groups completed in greater depth in Appendix I.

completed a short questionnaire to provide basic details on their parental background, former school/s and university choices. In addition to this, and where possible, this was combined with follow-up interviews with some students with experiences of particular circuits. Focus groups have the advantage of allowing the researcher to draw out 'shared understandings' (Merryweather, 2010: 2.2) which was particularly useful in discussing and contrasting experiences of school, journeys to school and hierarchies of school reputations. Reactivity amongst research participants (Spicer, 2004), where they influence each other's responses to questions, was both positive and negative, with tensions around conflicting experiences sometimes leading to fruitful discussion. Teachers would sometimes simply select a 'random' group of students for me to interview from their classes, leading to groups of students who did not necessarily know each other well or feel comfortable talking with each other. Where I had more free access to ask students to participate during lunchtime or free periods, the groups of students were more likely to be sitting amongst friends and therefore more comfortable with each other. On these occasions there tended to be more un-directed group discussion with little intervention from myself as moderator. This naturally also underlines issues of representativeness of the focus group samples, which were often opportunistic and thus not necessarily 'representative' of the school as a whole. To some extent this issue of representativeness of the sample obtained through the focus groups can be overcome through reference to the NPD data, interviews with staff, other local stakeholders and school histories. These qualitative data form the core material for chapters five and six, though both chapters also refer to quantitative data and historical material.

My approach to data analysis for the qualitative material used Miles and Huberman's (1994: 127) method of organizing and analysing data through 'conceptually ordered displays', in this case using excel spreadsheets. This organizes data from interviewees conceptually on the basis of *a priori* theoretical constructs. In my case the columns were based on different themes around the questions asked and basic categorizations of data from the questionnaire (family HE experience, subjects studied), rows were individual students. This was particularly useful in allowing the combining of questionnaire data with interview and focus group material. Creating a 'powerful conceptual grid' like this can have disadvantages as it becomes difficult to detect uncategorized data or escape the grid's conceptual model (Silverman, 2006: 94). For the interviews which were not associated with particular schools or colleges such as those with local stakeholders and those with former students of schools or colleges where interviewing was not possible on site, the data was also analysed in NVivo. This allowed a more iterative process of coding, though some of the same themes were still used. Despite the use of themes and questions determined prior to the fieldwork,

whether using the conceptually ordered displays or NVivo, the codes and categories were created and revised in an iterative process (Gibson and Brown, 2009: 136) on the basis of constant comparison between different focus groups. This approach thus uses some aspects of open coding, in particular the systematic comparison of different data to clarify *a priori* codes and those based on the data itself.

3.5.2. Quantitative data sources, methods and analysis

The quantitative data used in this research is embedded across the three empirical chapters but it forms the particular focus of chapter four. The data in chapter four comes from four datasets, I first describe the two sources which are used to analyse the geography of Oxbridge attendance and the geographies of private schooling; for all the quantitative analyses I introduce the methods used in greater depth in the empirical chapters themselves. For the spatial analyses of entry to Oxford and Cambridge and of private school participation since the crisis both use publicly available datasets which have data for the whole of England (DfE, 2015a; DfE, 2015d). For the Oxbridge analysis, maps are produced showing the simple distribution of schools with high and low percentages as well as maps showing the spatial clustering of elite schools and colleges sending high percentages of students winning places at Oxbridge. Location quotients showing which regions are over-represented in winning places at Oxbridge compared to the national average are also produced for all schools, private schools only, grammar schools only and comprehensive state schools only. The calculations and coding for these analyses were undertaken in R, ArcGIS and Excel. For the geographical analysis of private schooling, graphs showing regional trends in private school participation since 2007-08 were produced in R. Data showing the intake of the private school population are hard to find. One useful proxy is a report produced by the Independent Schools Council (2006), showing the intake of private schools in 2006-07 across different regions using the ACORN geodemographic classification. These data cannot be treated as equivalent to social class data and there is the potential problem of the ecological fallacy, with students from that particular postcode not necessarily sharing the typical cultural, social and economic characteristics of the neighbourhood as a whole. Nevertheless these data provide a useful insight into how private schools have different intake patterns across the UK, suggesting a further dimension of regional division in patterns of class formation and schooling.

The second section of analysis in chapter four examines the field of institutions in Sheffield and London using university destinations as an indicator of field position. The data I draw on here are not publicly available as they include individual-level data and were accessed through an application to the DfE for linked data⁴⁰ which combined data from the NPD with records held by HESA about students entering university. This provided the data I use in the network analysis of school to university circuits for the cohort of students who were born in 1991/92 and entered university in 2010-11/11-12. Using this cohort of students allows us to take into account students who took a gap year and/or re-sat A-level exams and entered university the following year and is consistent with the 'young participation rate' used by HEFCE (2013: 15). The modularity analysis method used in chapter four allows the identification of clusters or 'communities' of schools and universities which are more densely linked, purely by the numbers of students moving between them, than would be expected at random. The variables in the dataset also include NS-SEC and ethnicity which are used in chapters five and six to examine the intake of the schools discussed. In line with the initial intentions for this project the NPD-HESA data included only data for Sheffield and London, which made a broader analysis of the national field of post-16 suggested by school-HE circuits impossible. Had this data been available, it would have allowed a more granular analysis of the national field of education by allowing Geographical Information Systems (GIS) analysis of other school-university circuits apart from simply Oxbridge and the aggregated Russell Group data. When I applied for the data in October-December 2013, the potential usefulness of having data for the whole of England was not clear, which underlines how the emphasis of the thesis changed as the research developed.

3.6. Conclusions: towards a social science of accumulations

As I have stated above, the research design of this project shifted over the course of the research. My initial intention of furthering the comparison of the effect of gentrification on schooling in London as opposed to smaller provincial cities is still present in chapters five and six but it is no longer the primary concern. Instead the approach described here allows us to understand how middle-class circuits of education vary across a broader range of geographical scales; these circuits are intertwined with and help produce a distinctive set of

⁴⁰The Department for Education data request number pertaining to the data analysed is DR140110.03.

regional, city-level and local-neighbourhood hierarchies of schools and colleges at the post-16 stage. The methods described here allow us to move downward through these scales, first through providing a broad social and spatial map of the institutional fields at a regional and city scale within which elite and middle-class circuits of education occur at the post-16 stage. In concluding this chapter I refer back to the research questions (3.2) to show how the data collected and methods used allow us to respond to each question and how they are structured across the chapters.

In the next chapter (chapter four), the analysis is distinctly historical. I argue for the persistence of a particular institutional hierarchy of elite schools around London which continue to dominate access to Oxbridge. Data on HE destinations of individual schools across England are used as a means to distinguish the geography of elite schools in chapter 4 which corresponds to research question one and the related sub-question (question 1a.). The spatial position of schools within this national field is examined by analysing the geographical patterns of schools sending students to Oxbridge. Those schools with stronger circuits of education (i.e. with larger percentages of their students) linking them to the elite dyad of Oxford and Cambridge, are seen as being in dominant positions within the field of education in the post-16 phase. Schools with smaller percentages of students attending Oxbridge, whilst often *locally* prestigious and with strong middle-class contingents, maintain much narrower links to Oxford and Cambridge and are not seen as forming part of the *national* sub-field of elite schools at the post-16 phase which has a distinctive south-eastern geography. Private schooling is then used as a further means to examine the geographical differentiation of patterns of middle-class social reproduction with particular attention paid to the geographical effect of the 2008 crisis on private schools across the country (question 1b.). The first half of chapter four thus provides a context-setting analysis for the thesis as a whole, by examining how the national field of schooling is structured along the dimension of access to elite universities and through an analysis of the geography of private schooling. In the second half of the chapter I use network analysis to analyse a relational hierarchy, the field of post-16 institutions in Sheffield and London, a field which, is shaped by and through circuits of education. These circuits are not simply the collective patterns of individual trajectories and experience, by connecting schools to more or less prestigious universities they function as symbolic capital, accumulating and sedimenting over time to produce hierarchies of educational power. The social network analysis allows us to distinguish distinctive patterns in the hierarchies of post-16 institutions on entry to HE in Sheffield and London, which suggest specificities in both cases.

The second part of chapter four (question 1c.) uses a social network approach to examine how the fields of schooling within Sheffield and London are structured in terms of circuits of education, by examining how clusters of schools form which have stronger or weaker links to particular groups of universities. This analysis of institutional hierarchy at the post-16 phase suggests a binary divide in both settings, with a clear group of 'elite' schools sending large numbers of students to Russell Group universities with another group of schools and FE Colleges sending more students to the local post-1992 university. However, a key dimension of differentiation is between the 'super-state' schools which are included in the 'elite' cluster or sub-field in London and those *locally* 'elite' suburban state comprehensives in Sheffield which, despite their privileged and dominant position within the local field, do not compete with London's elite state schools. These super-state schools are far closer to London's elite private schools, and this additional cleavage within the hierarchy of schools is accentuated by the strong circuits connecting Sheffield Hallam University to Sheffield's suburban comprehensives.

This distinction between super-state and provincial suburban comprehensive, then structures the following two empirical chapters (chapters 5 and 6). These chapters move us down from the regional scale to analyse circuits of education and field positions at the neighbourhood level. The focus group material allows us to examine how students experience these unequal trajectories. In contrast, interviews with senior teachers allow us to examine how schools have acted to reinforce their dominance over the local and, in the case of the London super-states, national fields of post-16 education. Chapter five (questions 2a.-2c.) focuses on the 'super-state' schools of the capital, concentrating first on a case study of an elite Outer London boys' grammar school, KHS. Two other state schools within London's elite sub-field provide a contrast to KHS which is much closer to the elite private boys' schools in both attainment, Oxbridge entry and institutional culture than many of the schools in the elite subfield identified in chapter four. These two schools, Henrietta Barnett School (HBS), a girls' grammar in a wealthy Outer London suburb, and Camden School for Girls (CSG), a comprehensive in a gentrified neighbourhood of an inner London borough, are used to differentiate between the positions of schools within the sub-field, as well as a means to examine the different circuits of education in operation there. These schools are exceptional both within London and nationally, reflecting how they are tied into patterns of urban change and class formation, specifically gentrification and ethnic-minority suburbanization, which are London-specific. The historical trajectory of these institutions is

central here, as these contemporary circuits must be understood within both the recent 20-30 year trajectory of these schools as well as the more long-term development of these schools and their particular neighbourhoods since the late 19th century. Incorporating local histories of urban and educational change within the analysis allows us to see how institutional hierarchies and circuits are fashioned over time.

In the final chapter (chapter 6, questions 3a.-3e.) these super-state schools are contrasted to broadly similar patterns of circuits seen in suburban comprehensives across London and Sheffield. The historical understanding of contemporary educational inequalities spans the whole thesis and is carried through to the final empirical chapter which examines how suburban comprehensives form a particular *national* pattern of middle-class social reproduction which has developed since the 1970s. The case studies of Woodtham Park School in London and Valley Hills in Sheffield allow us to see how suburban middle-class enclaves have produced broadly similar middle-class circuits of education. These are locally-based circuits with educational trajectories that involve very little commuting and have a clear, continuous pathway through the local primary to the nearby suburban secondary, through the sixth form and on to university. Even in these schools however, distinctive patterns of local HE destinations at Valley Hills flagged by an analysis of the NPD data and the exclusionary costs of buying into the catchment of Woodtham Park further underline the differences between metropolitan and provincial institutional fields of education. These variations in the cost of buying into the catchment of suburban comprehensives also underlines the regionally-differentiated fragmentation of the middle class, with the affordability of suburban schooling increasingly threatened for lower-professionals (NS-SEC 2) in London but not in Sheffield.

These methods and data thus allow a relational comparison across spatial scales of analysis, between institutions and over time. This approach to distinguishing between elite and middle-class patterns of social reproduction and hierarchies of schooling is complex, involving methodological triangulation, multiple case studies and careful choice of comparison across two cities. It is not without its limitations and a broader geography of elite and middle-class education in the UK still remains to be done. What is attempted here is methodological beginning of how we might seek to understand contemporary sociologies and geographies of education as the outcome of layers of urban, regional and educational change. Accumulations of symbolic and cultural power within particular institutions and neighbourhoods are not simply produced through decisions of individual students or groups

of students or even headteachers. They are the outcome of multiple conflicts over the classed and ethnic segregation of cities, the fraught local negotiations over school reform and the broader national divisions between education policy of central government, which has often in effect aimed to bolster or leave untouched the cultural power of the elite educational institutions of the South-East, and the now fragmenting local authority system. Peeling back the layers of these historical social changes and examining how students' circuits of education and institutions' field positions continue to embody these historical transformations is the object of the analysis that follows.

4 Infrastructures of social reproduction: the structural geography of educational power in England and the institutional field of post-16 education in London and Sheffield

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, two different theoretical constructs for the analysis of how social reproduction is patterned through the education system are combined. As I have outlined above, these are firstly, circuits of education – the collective patterns of individual trajectories by gender, class and race which form distinctive socio-spatial routes through the school system. Secondly, Bourdieu's concept of institutional field is applied to schools and colleges at post-16 level to understand the hierarchy between schools within their 'local' field in Sheffield and London and nationally to observe the regional distribution of 'elite' schools. The approach taken here primarily looks at this hierarchy in relation to how schools and colleges' capacity to act as conduits to certain universities structures their position within national and local fields of post-16 institutions. Smith's (1982a: xi-xii) study of class and conflict in Birmingham and Sheffield over the 19th century noted how 'class formation in each city was fundamentally conditioned by the way it "fitted into" structures focused at the regional and national levels.' Similarly, this chapter attempts to analyse post-16 to university circuits in Sheffield and London relationally by examining how particular circuits of education position schools and colleges both locally within each urban-educational field, as well as nationally. In the two case study areas, this is done using a method drawn from social network analysis for detecting clusters of nodes, 'communities', with a higher concentration of edges (i.e. numbers of students going from a post-16 institution to a particular university) than seen elsewhere in the graph. This technique is applied to the NPD-HESA data (DfE and HESA, 2014) showing the school to university movements of all students starting university in 2010/11 or 2011-12 from the cohort that finished KS4 in 2007/08 in London and Sheffield. I elaborate on these methods in greater detail below. These contrasting community structures reveal the substantial differences in educational hierarchies in a metropolitan, London setting compared to a provincial urban field of post-16. The divisions in circuits of education

suggested by the SNA are then used to interpret institutions positions within local and national fields of education.

Before analysing the patterning of circuits at the level of connections between schools/colleges and specific universities, however, I first examine the geographical structure of educational power in England and the UK. This critical analysis is broken into three stages, firstly the geography of schools' acceptances at Oxford and Cambridge, secondly an analysis of the intake of private schools and finally recent regional trends in private school participation. Running through these sub-sections is a common thread exploring the dominance of the South-East when it comes to the concentration of elite educational institutions and the socio-economic basis that supports this. This first section examines the national hierarchy of post-16 institutions, primarily by mapping publically available data on HE destinations (DfE, 2015a). This follows Bourdieu's relational approach to studying the field of elite HE in France, beginning 'by drawing a *social topology* of *grandes écoles*' (Original emphasis. Wacquant, 1993: 8). In this case the 'social topology' is an explicitly spatial one, with the deliberate aim of uncovering a persistent structural geography of educational power within the English educational system.

This analysis is then contextualized historically, referring to and updating the educational elements of the Anderson-Nairn-Rubinstein thesis discussed above (See 2.5.2). It is also complemented using current and recent data on the geography of private school participation and the demography of private school intakes. This is used to update and corroborate Rubinstein's (1977a: 31; 1977b: 112-114; 1986: 119-201; Anderson, 1995) suggestion that the public school-Oxbridge nexus is associated particularly with a wealthier Southern middle class centred on London. It is in fact possible to provide some historical evidence for Rubinstein's hypothesis that Anderson (1995: 31) rightly notes is missing, and in appendix B, I provide a map showing which schools Oxbridge students were recruited from in 1867 and how many students were taken from each school alongside an equivalent map for 2012-13. There is an infrastructure of elite and middle-class social reproduction which remains distinctively concentrated in and around the capital and, despite certain changes, this geographic constellation of elite secondary institutions has, if anything, expanded over the 20th century. Recent research has described this elite clustering on London after graduation as the 'metropolitan vortex' (Cunningham and Savage, 2015) in a paper which has provided new perspectives on old debates around the metropolitan-London dominance of English and British cultural, political and economic life (Dyos, 1971; Martin,

1988; Gregory, 1988; Dorling, 2008). This first section analyses the schools and colleges feeding into a university system which is already segregated with elites concentrated in universities of the 'golden triangle' of Oxford, Cambridge and London (Wakeling and Savage, 2015a; 2015b). As well as revealing these distinctive London-centric patterns, this first section also indicates national patterns and institutional positions within the field of post-16 which provide a bridge into the subsequent SNA sections for Sheffield and London individually.

4.2 Part One: the structural geography of educational power

4.2.1 Educational elites and the golden triangle in the post-16 to HE transition

The geography of elites in terms of their participation in HE, seems to corroborate the broader consensus around the concentration of wealth and cultural and political power in and around the capital. Both Wakeling and Savage (2015a; 2015b) and Williams and Filippakou (2010) have noted the consistent role of Oxford and Cambridge and certain London universities in educating the elite. Despite this recent research the geography of university recruitment from certain schools or from the reverse perspective, the geography of *elite* HE destinations at the end of post-16, has seen relatively little attention. Using publically available data (DfE, 2015a), I examine the geography of university recruitment to provide a critical analysis of how the field of post-16 is structured nationally. It suggests a picture in which inequality has been effectively maintained through the expansion of post-16 and HE (Harland, 1988; Lucas, 2001; Boliver, 2011b; Boliver, 2011a). This refers specifically to a distinctive geography of post-16 provision when it comes to accessing Oxford and Cambridge with geographical distributions for the Russell Group and other university types being less distinctive. The apex of this hierarchy (both state and private), in terms of the schools sending the highest percentages of students to Oxbridge, is concentrated on London. This builds on and develops earlier work by the Sutton Trust (2011), though viewing and interpreting this data through a different theoretical lens. I now briefly describe the methods and data used before examining the maps on pp. 101-104.

The data (DfE, 2015a) used here refers to the 2012-13 year of entry to university and with the exception of the Russell Group map, shows the percentage of students at each school

attending Oxford and/or Cambridge. For the first maps, Figure 1-Figure 4, I explore the geography of schools sending students to Oxbridge. As most schools send no students to Oxbridge or so few that the DfE suppresses the statistic,⁴¹ I have excluded schools sending no students to Oxbridge in Figure 1 to Figure 4. This allows us to distinguish more easily between schools sending just a handful of students to Oxbridge and those that effectively act as feeder schools sending very large percentages of their cohort to Oxbridge. These maps use Jenks' Natural Breaks to maximise variance between classes whilst limiting the variance within each group. This makes each classification individual to each distribution but the same geographical pattern was evident using a standardized classification. The maps included on pages 103 to 106 (Figure 1 to Figure 6)⁴² show Oxford and Cambridge participation for all schools as well as for non-selective state schools for reasons which I will discuss below. To examine the spatial clustering which becomes apparent in these descriptive maps, a Local Moran's I spatial auto-correlation (Lloyd, 2010: 110-113) is applied to the transformed percentage of students⁴³ attending Oxbridge (Figure 5) and the Russell Group (Figure 6). These maps reveal statistically significant clusters of schools with high participation schools surrounded by other schools with high participation (high-high) or schools with low participation (high-low). Similarly there are low-high clusters as well as low-low cluster of schools with low Oxbridge recruitment. The large number of schools sending no students to Oxbridge and the Russell Group (included in both cluster analyses) also contribute to a large number of schools that are not clustered in statistically significant patterns. The threshold distance for both maps was calculated through an incremental spatial auto-correlation which suggested 'peaks', distances at which spatial clustering is most pronounced, of 4km and 22km for the Russell Group analysis and 8km and 28km for Oxbridge. I have taken the longer distances here as they give an indication of the clustering of high/low-performing schools over a larger sub-region which is more suited both for large conurbations and rural areas. These distances could also be considered the distance over which a long commutes to school may occur, for example the private school Sheffield Girls' High runs busses from Tickhill in South Yorkshire, 24.6km as the crow flies.

⁴¹ The suppression of this data is due to the small number of students involved and the theoretical possibility of identification for the individual/s in question.

⁴² Data for Figs 1 to 6: (DfE, 2015a).

⁴³ As Lloyd (2010) does in his study, transformation of the data should be considered if the data is non-normal. In this case as there are a large number of zeros in the data, I have used the inverse hyperbolic sine transformation suggested by Burbidge *et al.* (1988) to account for the strong positive skew in the data.

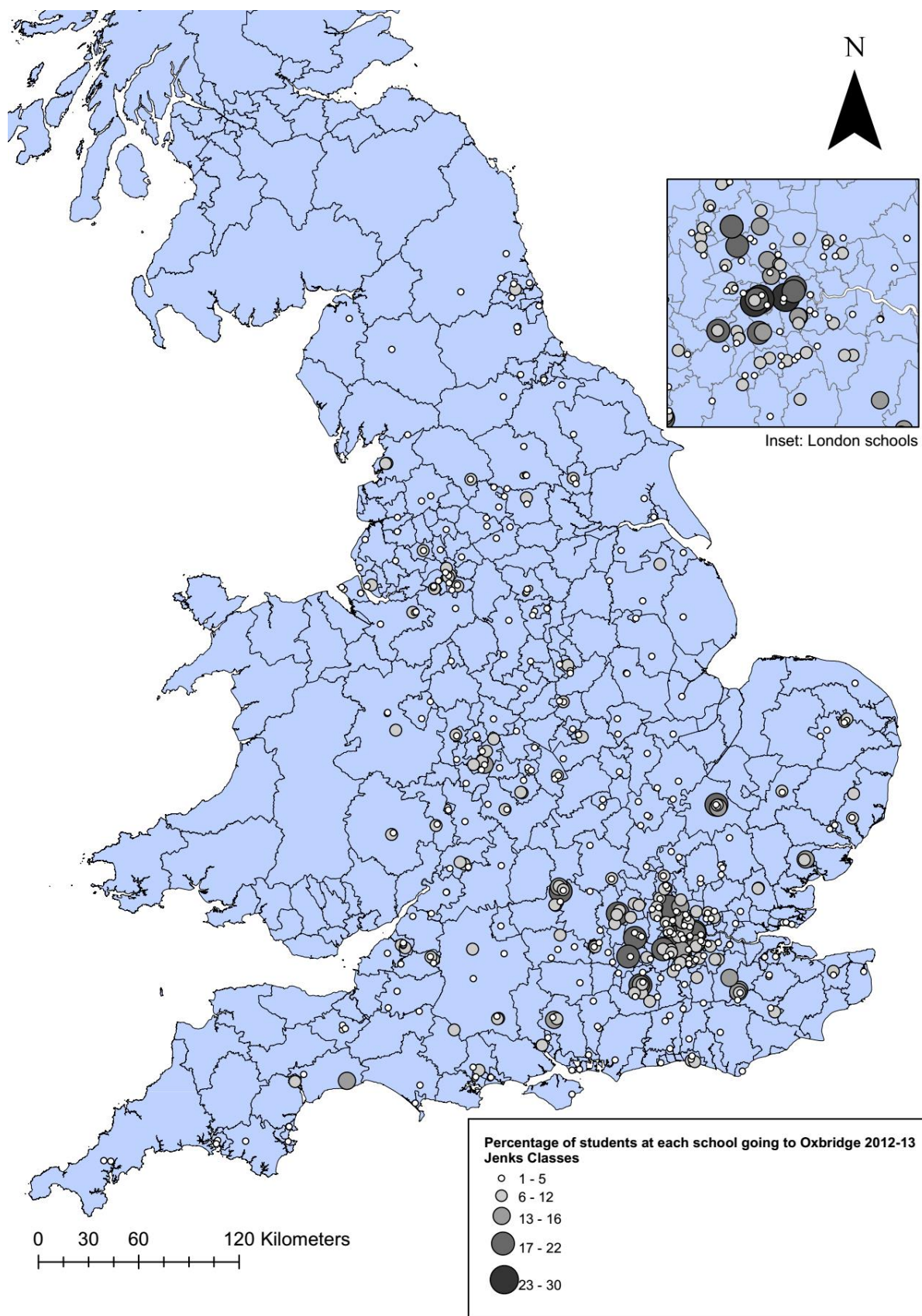


Figure 1 All schools sending one percent or more of their students to Oxford and/or Cambridge 2012-13

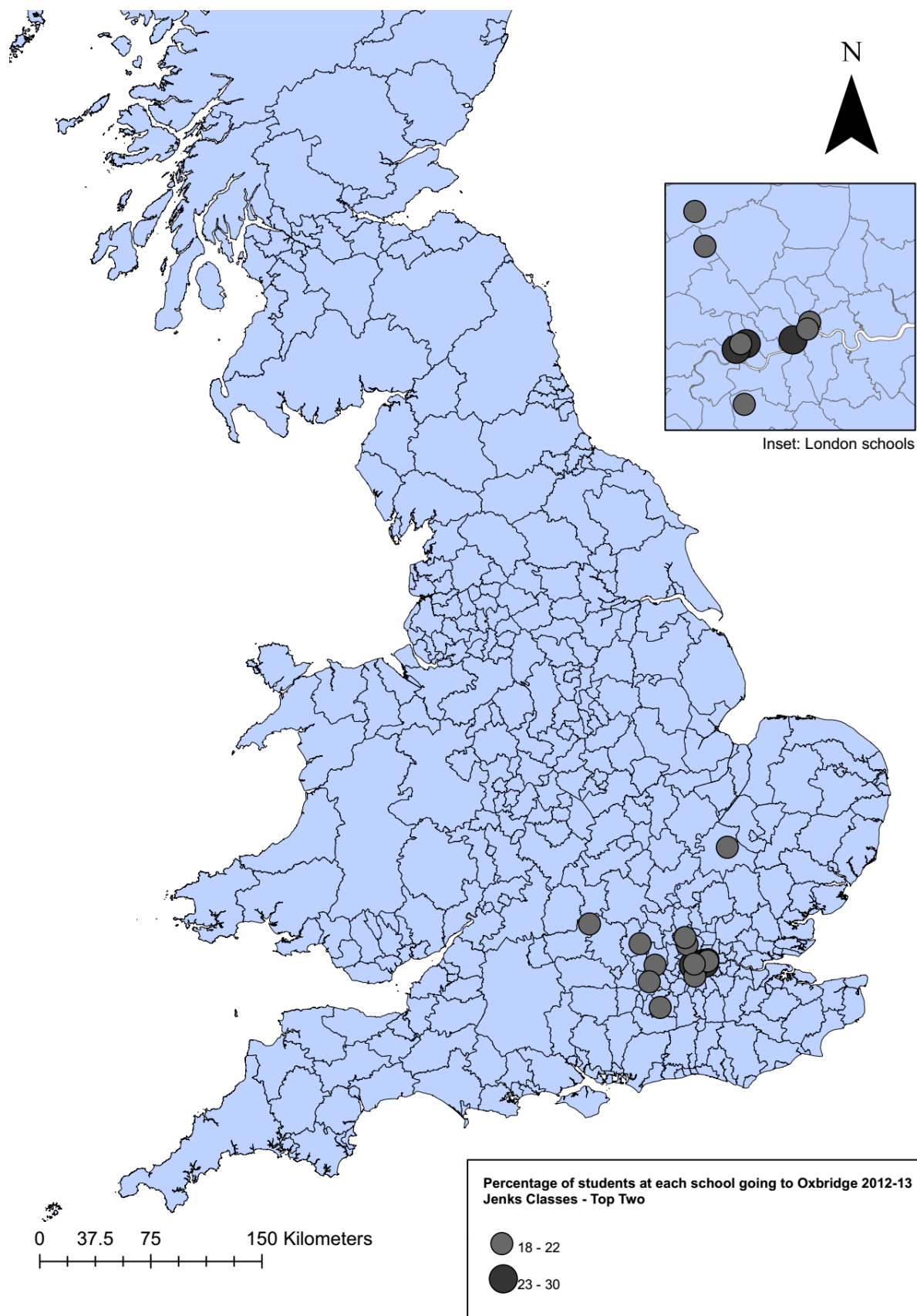


Figure 2 All schools sending one percent or more of their students to Oxford and/or Cambridge 2012-13 top two jenks classes

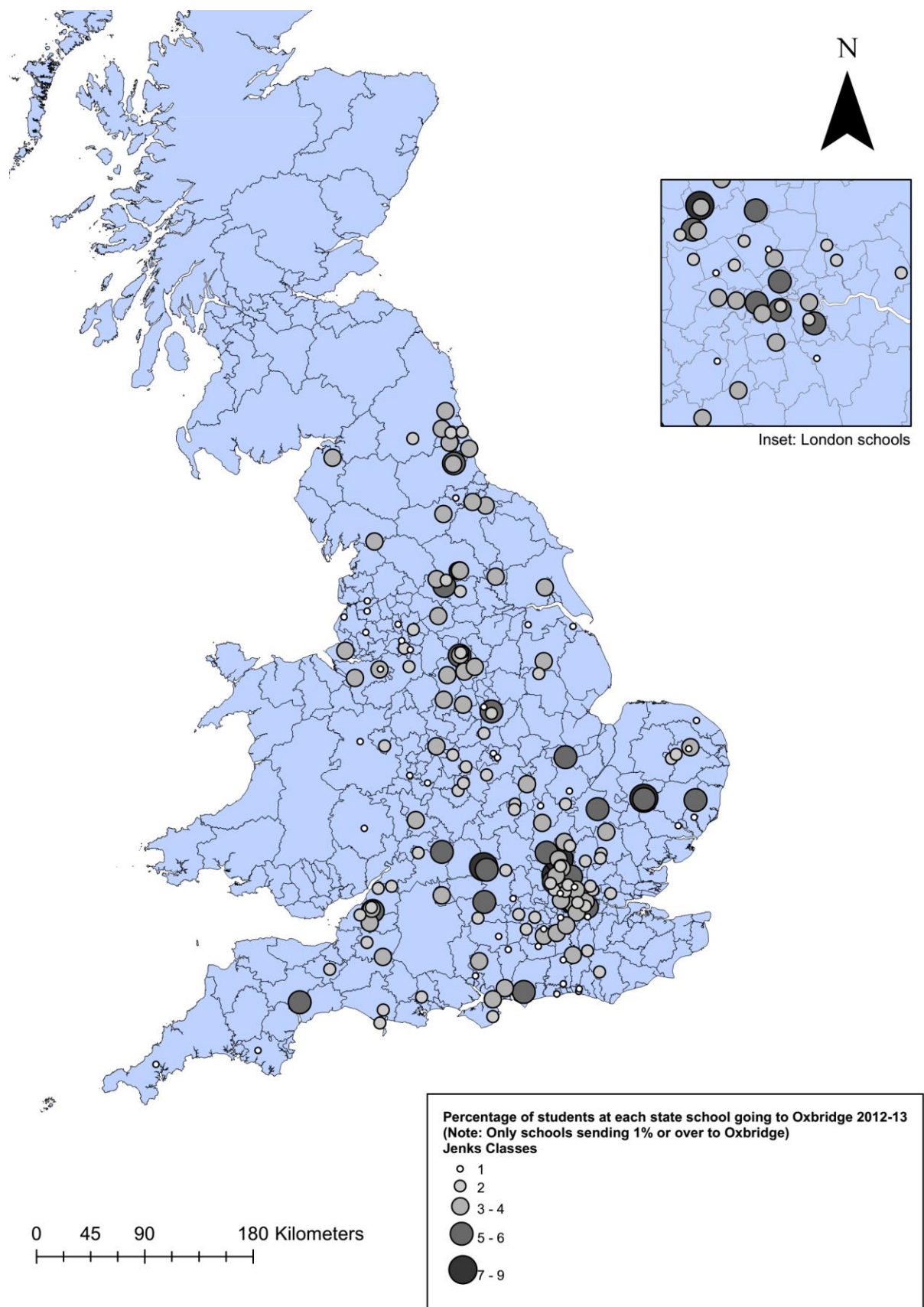


Figure 3 All non-selective state-schools sending one per cent or more of their students to Oxford and/or Cambridge 2012-13

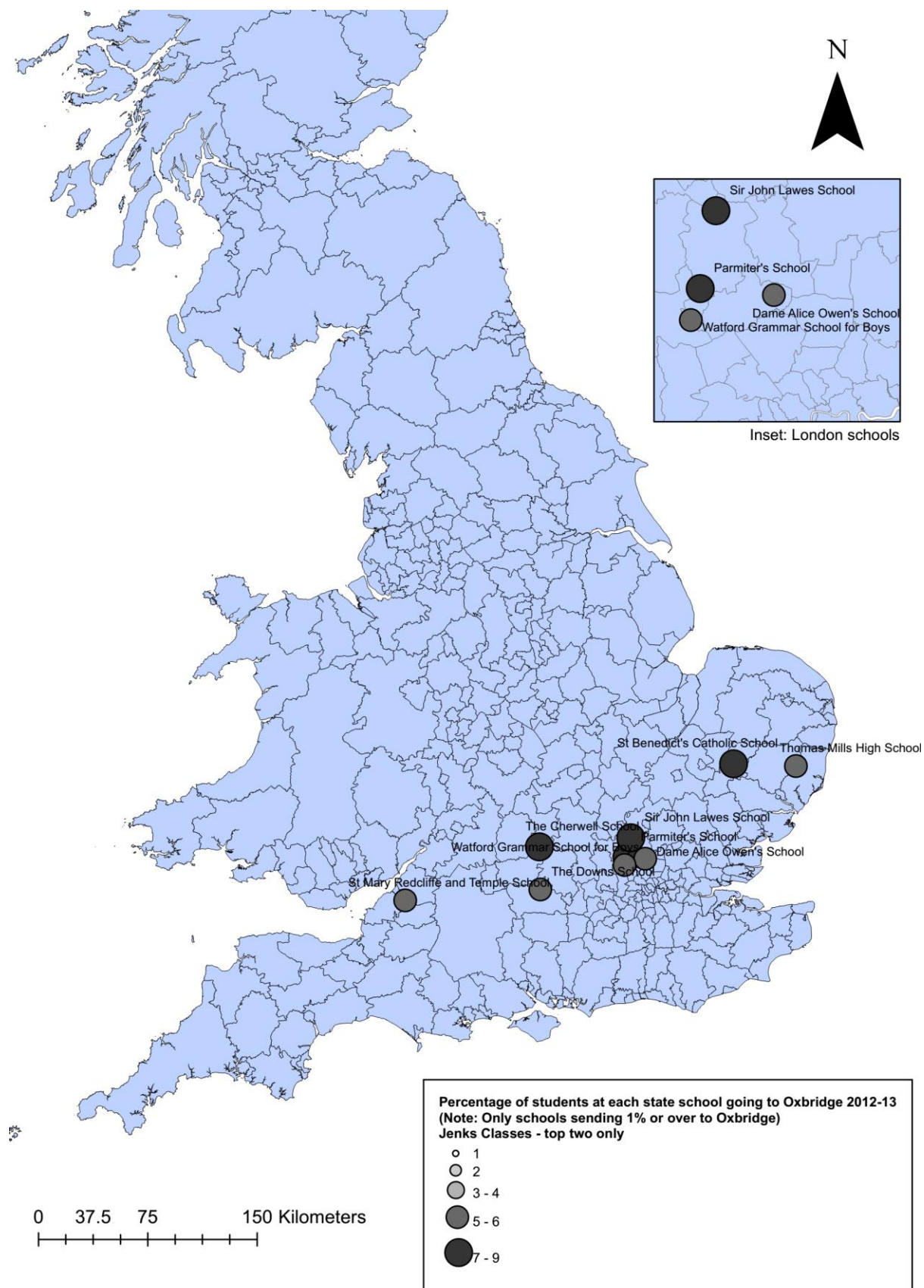


Figure 4 All non-selective state-schools sending one per cent or more of their students to Oxford and/or Cambridge 2012-13, top two jenks classes

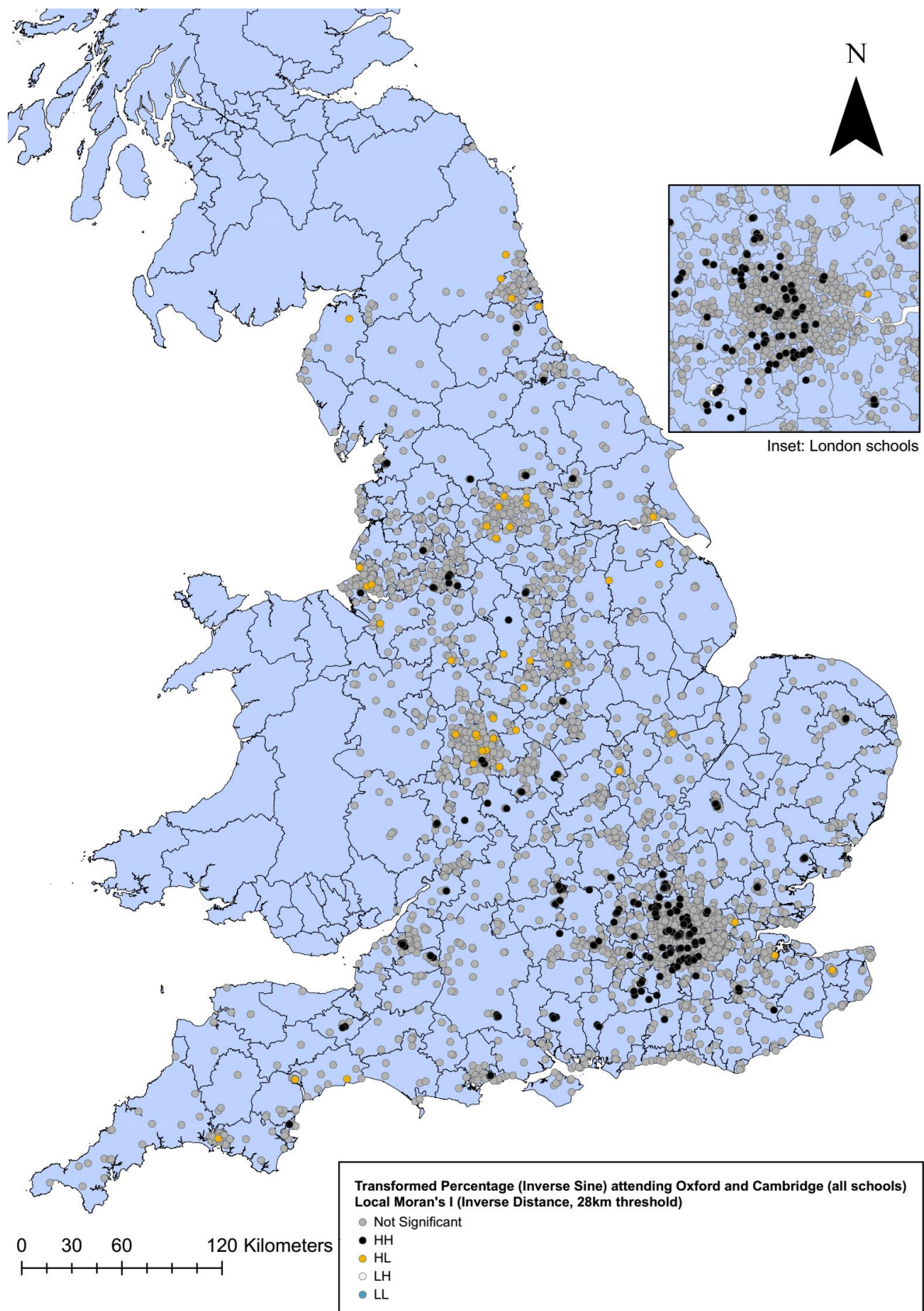


Figure 5 Spatial cluster analysis (Local Moran's I) of schools with high percentages of students going to Oxbridge 2012-13. Inverse Sine transformation.

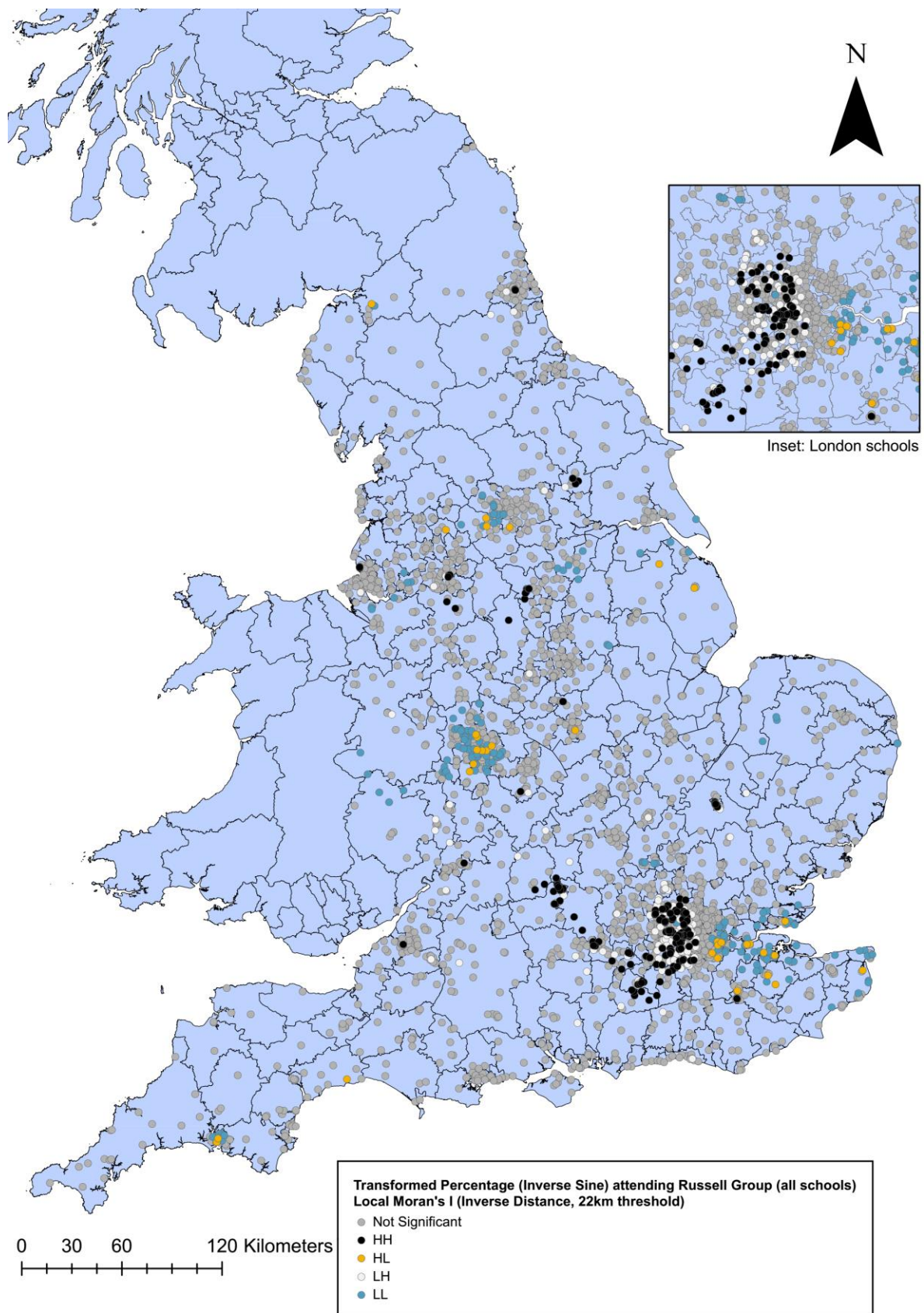


Figure 6 Spatial cluster analysis (Local Moran's I) of schools with high percentages of students going to Russell Group Universities 2012-13. Inverse Sine transformation.

What Figure 1 suggests is that there are two key logics structuring the geography of Oxbridge's recruitment of students. On the one hand they 'cream off' small numbers of students from a broad range of nationally distributed schools, with most of the non-selective state schools being excluded after this stage (the first Jenks class, 1-5%). These schools, often locally dominant within their own local fields, are not dominant institutions nationally. On the other, Oxbridge has a smaller number of *de facto* 'feeder' schools which send much larger percentages of their students to Oxbridge and with the exception of a few very high-attaining sixth form colleges, these are also the schools sending the largest numbers of students to Oxbridge. Figure 1 shows clearly the absence of these elite feeder schools from the North of England and much of the Midlands; North of Birmingham there are no schools in the top three Jenks classes. By removing the lower three Jenks classes, in Figure 2 we can see clearly the south-eastern geographical bias of these elite feeder schools, but the institutions in question are all private schools. To look at the state sector more specifically, I have produced the same analysis for non-selective state institutions only, revealing a similar southern bias (Figures 3-4). I have labelled the institutions in Figure 4 as the Hertfordshire schools are persistently (across the last three cohorts) sending the highest percentage of students to Oxbridge for non-selective institutions nationally. This underlines the continuing educational power present in certain more affluent satellite towns and commuter villages (Pahl, 1963; Smith and Higley, 2012), with schools having preserved various modes of aptitude testing despite the abolition of full selection.⁴⁴ These maps allow an understanding of how students' university choices have an implicit 'geography of taken-for-granted, possibilities and improbabilities' (Reay et al., 2001: 5.8). Choice is underpinned by and expressed through this institutional geography of access to elite universities. This is also a geography of the infrastructure of educational power, with these patterns of HE participation woven into a broader history of elite and middle-class social reproduction in and around the capital.

An alternative means of revealing the spatial clustering of schools with high proportions of their students attending elite universities is provided in figures 5-6. We can see clearly in figure 5 the scale and strength of the nexus of schools in London, its immediate surrounds with notable clusters in Guildford, Hertfordshire as well as Cambridge and Oxford. The high-high clusters in London's commuter satellites like Guildford, Tonbridge, Wycombe and St Albans deserve further qualitative analysis than can be provided here. They certainly

⁴⁴ For Dame Alice Owen's and Parmiter's, it also underlines the institutional success brought about through re-location and avoiding comprehensivisation in inner London (Gamsu, 2015b).

suggest that the process of education-based gentrification of Home Counties towns and villages with high-attaining grammar and/or private schools by London commuters described by Smith and Hingley (2012) could be more widespread. As with the case of the Hertfordshire comprehensives discussed above, these educational ‘super towns’ as Savills (2009) termed them, find their closest parallels in the North in Lancaster, Skipton, Harrogate and York which also have high-high clusters. However, if we refer back to Figure 1 we can see that these Northern equivalents have a far smaller percentage of students attending Oxbridge than in the south-eastern satellite towns. Excluding York, the high-high clusters in these small northern towns/cities are also all isolated grammar schools unlike in the southern, London satellites which contain both grammars and private schools. There is something quite particular about these small towns which suggests there could well be overlap between the concentration of elite groups on London/ROSE (Phillips, 2007; Savage et al., 2013) and the concentration of schools which function as conduits for circuits of education leading to elite universities and beyond. These schools and colleges serve as central conduit nodes in what could be hypothesised as circuits of power: middle-class students from the South-East move from local elite state/private schools, into elite universities and beyond into elite jobs which are now even more concentrated in the South-East than when this cultural and economic dualism first began to develop in the late 19th century. The data presented here does not allow us to examine this empirically but the concept is a useful hypothesis which deserves greater attention and is not without supporting evidence.⁴⁵ What can be shown here is how the ‘metropolitan vortex’ is not only supported by the golden triangle of elite universities of Oxford, Cambridge, UCL, Imperial, LSE and King’s College London (Cunningham and Savage, 2015; Wakeling and Savage, 2015b), but by a prior incubating stage of post-16 education.

Outside of this dominant nexus of south-eastern schools which are the principal institutional conduits to Oxbridge (figure 5), the high-high clusters are smaller, generally two/three schools at most, with the notable exception of Greater Manchester with several large private schools as well as Trafford’s surviving state grammars. There are also a larger number of

⁴⁵ Fielding’s (1992: 8-9) work showed specifically how graduates from outside of the South-East of England who then move into the region were more likely to move into the service class than any other group of in-migrants to the South-East between 1971 and 1981. Fielding (1993: 133; 2007: 116) also provided the raw data for these figures, which revealed how in absolute terms a much larger number of individuals who were students in 1971 and moved into the service class by 1981 were studying *within* the South-East compared to those in-migrants who were in education outside of the South-East in 1971. Just under 12,000 new individuals joined the service class in the South-East between 1971 and 1981, of these 3498 or 29% were studying in the South-East in 1971 and 1230 or 10% were in-migrants who had been studying at a university outside the South-East in 1971.

high-low clusters in the North of England – relatively isolated schools sending large percentages to Oxbridge relative to other local schools. We can also see a distinctive south-eastern skew in the geography of Russell Group participation in the final map (Figure 6). Here we can see quite clearly a south-eastern concentration of high-high clusters of schools, which send very high proportions of their students to Russell Group universities. Notable provincial outposts here include suburban schools of the Sheffield Hallam constituency, as well as schools in York. This map also reveals ‘coldspots’ with clusters of schools sending very few students to Russell Group universities. In the case of Kent, Birmingham, South-End and Lincolnshire, it seems likely that these low-low clusters are caused in part by the grammar school system, which would also explain the isolated high-low institutions in these areas, but not in others such as parts of West and South Yorkshire and Shropshire.

If we shift from schools to examine the regional distribution of Oxbridge places, we can see further evidence for this south-eastern bias. Calculating the location quotient simply involves dividing the percentage of students attending Oxbridge in a particular region by the percentage of students attending Oxbridge nationally. If the resulting number is over 1 we can say that there is a greater concentration of students attending Oxbridge than the national average, that is, there are more students than would be expected given the population size of schools in that region.⁴⁶ Taking all schools together (Figure 7; for figs. 7-9 see pp. 110-111), we can see that there is a clear geographical bias in Oxbridge recruitment with schools in London, the South-East and the East of England substantially over-represented. The northern regions and especially the North-East have a lower concentration of students attending Oxbridge than the national average. These figures, whilst providing evidence of a broad geographical division hide some discrepancies between school types. If we look at independent schools only (Figure 8), we can see that private schools in London/ROSE win more than their fair share of places at Oxbridge. Looking only at non-selective state post-16 institutions (Figure 9), this geographical bias is maintained with the exception of Yorkshire, where comprehensive state provision is slightly over-represented, and Outer London which falls dramatically with a location quotient of just 0.51. The reason behind this fall can almost certainly be explained in relation to Figure 10 which shows that relative to grammar school students elsewhere, Outer London’s grammars provide a larger share of students to Oxbridge than would be expected (LQ=1.51) with only the East of England grammars⁴⁷ out-performing them (LQ=1.65). A similar effect is present comparing

⁴⁶ I use the Government Office Region definition.

⁴⁷ These are all found in the *ceremonial* county of Essex.

grammars and comprehensives in the West Midlands, which suggests the polarising effect of grammar schools on HE destinations in non-selective schools. In absolute terms then, we can say that there is a regional bias to Oxbridge recruitment, which varies slightly with school type.

Region	Total	Oxbr_Tot	RsGp_Tot	Top30_Tot	Oxbr_LQ	RsGp_LQ	Top30_LQ
East Midlands	30170	161	3540	4927	0.59	0.90	0.88
East of England	44690	461	5712	9012	1.14	0.98	1.09
Inner London	17640	302	2459	3786	1.89	1.07	1.16
North East	16920	67	1879	2179	0.44	0.85	0.70
North West	52340	269	6966	8675	0.57	1.02	0.90
Outer London	36620	455	5946	9301	1.37	1.25	1.38
South East	70380	932	9891	14981	1.46	1.08	1.15
South West	37460	331	4587	6143	0.98	0.94	0.89
West Midlands	41810	292	4717	6630	0.77	0.87	0.86
Yorkshire and the Humber	36060	208	4388	5283	0.64	0.93	0.79

Figure 7 Regional location quotients for students attending Oxbridge, the Russell Group or the 'top 30' most selective universities 2012-13. All schools.

Note: for each table here the first four columns are student numbers, the latter three columns are location quotients. Data for figures 7-10: (DfE, 2015a)

Region	Total	Oxbr_Tot	RsGp_Tot	Top30_Tot	Oxbr_LQ	RsGp_LQ	Top30_LQ
East Midlands	2350	49	899	1102	0.50	1.04	1.03
East of England	4520	181	1746	2224	0.97	1.05	1.08
Inner London	3010	244	1256	1514	1.96	1.13	1.11
North East	850	17	354	409	0.48	1.13	1.06
North West	2750	72	1170	1394	0.63	1.15	1.12
Outer London	3360	222	1536	1883	1.60	1.24	1.23
South East	9610	442	3325	4169	1.11	0.94	0.95
South West	4750	126	1306	1620	0.64	0.75	0.75
West Midlands	3150	115	1060	1339	0.88	0.91	0.94
Yorkshire and the Humber	2200	44	813	955	0.48	1.00	0.96

Figure 8 Regional location quotients for students attending Oxbridge, the Russell Group or the 'top 30' most selective universities 2012-13. Private schools only.

Region	Total	Oxbr_Tot	RsGp_Tot	Top30_Tot	Oxbr_LQ	RsGp_LQ	Top30_LQ
East Midlands	26250	85	2264	3312	0.96	0.98	0.95
East of England	38990	205	3437	6020	1.56	1.00	1.16
Inner London	14630	58	1203	2272	1.18	0.93	1.16
North East	16070	50	1525	1770	0.92	1.08	0.83
North West	46720	106	4679	5953	0.67	1.14	0.96
Outer London	30160	52	2918	5439	0.51	1.10	1.35
South East	52850	246	4198	7174	1.38	0.90	1.02
South West	30080	100	2453	3441	0.99	0.93	0.86
West Midlands	36230	59	2670	3998	0.48	0.84	0.83
Yorkshire and the Humber	32960	134	3267	3964	1.21	1.13	0.90

Figure 9 Regional location quotients for students attending Oxbridge, the Russell Group or the 'top 30' most selective universities 2012-13. Non-selective state schools only.

Region	Total	Oxbr_Tot	RsGp_Tot	Top30_Tot	Oxbr_LQ	RsGp_LQ	Top30_LQ
East Midlands	1570	27	377	513	0.45	0.68	0.67
East of England	1180	75	529	768	1.65	1.27	1.34
North West	2870	91	1117	1328	0.82	1.10	0.95
Outer London	3100	181	1492	1979	1.51	1.36	1.32
South East	7920	244	2368	3638	0.80	0.84	0.95
South West	2630	105	828	1082	1.04	0.89	0.85
West Midlands	2430	118	987	1293	1.26	1.15	1.10
Yorkshire and the Humber	900	30	308	364	0.86	0.97	0.83

Figure 10 Regional location quotients for students attending Oxbridge, the Russell Group or the 'top 30' most selective universities 2012-13. Selective state (grammar) schools only.

Note: the North East and Inner London are absent in this figure as there are no grammar schools in either region.

Viewed alongside the maps, the location quotients provide further evidence of the strength of the relationship between London/ROSE and Oxbridge, this occurs not just on graduation, when students are sucked into the 'metropolitan vortex' of elite employment (Cunningham and Savage, 2015), but also on entry to university when attendance at an Oxbridge feeder school (private or state) gives a far greater chance of gaining acceptance than studying at most provincial schools. This evidence is not enough to provide any contemporary appraisal of the continuing relevance of Rubinstein's (1977b: 99) broader claim about the existence of two middle classes in Victorian Britain. What it does show however, is some empirical evidence to develop his observation that most of the 'great public schools were, of course, located in London or the Home Counties' (Rubinstein, 1977b: 113-114). In the late 19th century, a university degree was not necessary for middle-class professional employment and the percentage of students attending Oxbridge in elite public boys schools actually fell slightly as the 19th century progressed (Rubinstein, nd). However, what developed in the

South-East of England from the late 19th century was a much larger and more deeply entrenched private sector than was seen in the North of England. These schools have maintained and solidified their links to Oxbridge gradually as the importance of HE grew and competition from the state sector also grew. With certain caveats, even in state sector schools (both selective and non-selective) there is a clear concentration of elite institutions, judged by proportion of students sent to Oxbridge, around the South-East. It is still the elite private schools of the South-East which remain the largest providers to Oxbridge, though certain state institutions run them close in both percentage terms and absolute numbers (for the latter see Figure 28, p. 267). This suggests that the expansion of secondary education over the twentieth century offered very little challenge to the elite educational infrastructure which became embedded in and around the capital in the late 19th century. What is fascinating is that amongst the remaining English grammar schools and, even more interesting, the ‘comprehensive’ schools and colleges, it is primarily those in the South-East which can make greatest claim to act as *de facto* Oxbridge feeder schools within the state sector. Through the state education reforms of the 20th century, the expansion of secondary education for all seems to have entrenched and extended this spatial division in the infrastructure of elite and middle-class social reproduction in England. The ethos and culture of London’s ‘super-state’ schools will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

The south-eastern bias of non-selective elite *state* schools sending high proportions of their students to Oxbridge implies a particular set of circuits of education developed around London during the post-war period and especially since comprehensivisation. What appears to have occurred is the creation of specific metropolitan middle-class circuits (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Bridge, 2006a) in and around London, within the ‘new’ state secondary system but linked to a greater or lesser degree into the historical nexus of London-Oxford-Cambridge. The comprehensive schools which are positioned within the elite sub-field of London’s schools at post-16 (section 4.3) underline the contradictions of comprehensive school reform. The institutions within this grouping are overwhelmingly former grammar schools which have preserved their status in particular through their successful 6th forms (Kerckhoff et al., 1997) as will be explained below. This preservation of status also occurred in Sheffield but without the same metropolitan formations of class and ethnicity which have been discussed in the literature examining urban school choice in London (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Vincent et al., 2004; Ball et al., 2004; Butler and Hamnett, 2011). As will become apparent this process has a strong ethnic dimension in certain London grammar schools. These London-Sheffield differences will be explored in greater detail in section

4.3.4. In geographical terms, the 'golden triangle' is underpinned by a constellation of 'super-state' and private schools which function as the predominant feeder schools to Oxbridge. Despite the in-roads made by certain state grammars in challenging the older public schools in terms of Oxbridge acceptances, it remains the independent schools which dominate access to this elite educational dyad. This south-eastern cluster of private educational institutions is also underpinned by a different geodemographic intake to the rest of England, which reflects broader historical patterns as well as recent developments in the structural geography of educational power in England.

4.2.2 Regional private school intakes and the South-East: Rubinstein's hypothesis maintained?

An analysis of trends in private school participation and intake also allows us to shed light on whether there is any contemporary relevance to Rubinstein's (1977b: 113-114; 1986: 199-201) arguments that the Victorian south-eastern middle class had a qualitatively different engagement in the public school system and Oxbridge to its dissenting, industrial Northern counterpart. We have already seen that there is a south-eastern bias to Oxbridge 'feeder' schools, this section will examine the geography of private school intakes on the eve of the 2008 crisis and will be followed by an analysis of regional private school participation rates. Generally it is difficult to access data on parental background for private school students. One exception to this is a report commissioned by the Independent Schools' Council (ISC) on the eve of the financial crisis analysing students in the 2005-06 academic year. The report collected the data of 345,000 students (around 75% of UK students attending ISC schools) and matched them to their ACORN geo-demographic classification, producing a report (Independent Schools Council, 2006) which collated the data to regional level. This data reveals considerable differences between London and the South-East and the rest of the country in terms of the demographic characteristics of the neighbourhoods where private school students live.

<i>ACORN Category</i>	<i>% of UK Pop.</i>	<i>% of surveyed private schools</i>	<i>ACORN Group</i>	<i>% of UK Pop.</i>	<i>% of surveyed private schools</i>
1. <i>Wealthy Achievers</i>	25.5	59.85	Wealthy Executives	8.6	36.5
			Affluent Greys	7.9	11.8
			Flourishing Families	9	11.5
2. <i>Urban Prosperity</i>	11.4	20.3	Prosperous Professionals	2.1	9.3
			Educated Urbanites	5.5	9.0
			Aspiring Singles	3.8	2.0
3. <i>Comfortably-Off</i>	27.4	14.74	Starting Out	3.1	1.3
			Secure Families	15.5	9.3
			Settled Suburbia	6.1	1.9
			Prudent Pensioners	2.7	2.3
4. <i>Moderate Means</i>	13.7	2.93	Asian Communities	1.5	0.3
			Post-Industrial Families	4.7	1.3
			Blue-collar Roots	7.5	1.4
5. <i>Hard-Pressed</i>	21.2	2.15	Struggling Families	13.3	1.3
			Burdened Singles	4.2	0.3
			High-Rise Hardship	1.6	0.1
			Inner City Adversity	2.1	0.4

Table 2: ACORN Category and Group as a percentage of the UK population compared to percentage of surveyed private schools.

Data: Adapted from (CACI, 2006; Independent Schools Council, 2006)

The ACORN classification (CACI, 2006) is split into three levels: Categories (the broadest definition), Groups and Types (the micro-level classification). In the table above I compare the percentage of the UK population in each Category and Group with the percentage in private schools. Unsurprisingly this suggests that private schools over-recruit from more affluent neighbourhoods, with students from less affluent communities under-represented. The graphs produced here (figs. 11-14) show Groups and Types, the lower level classifications. Figure 11 and 12 (p. 116) show the raw count and percentages for each of the Acorn Groups. Unsurprisingly, in absolute terms (Figure 11) London/ROSE contain the largest number of students from the most affluent classification Groups. Two of the three wealthiest Groups, Flourishing Families and Wealthy Executives, are found in their greatest numbers in the South-East (Figure 11). These are families living in detached properties in suburbs or commuter developments with the highest levels of personal wealth in terms of savings, unit trusts and very strong readership of broadsheets, particularly The Telegraph, The Sunday Times and to a lesser extent The Financial Times. The Acorn *Type*, 'Wealthy Mature Professionals, Large Houses', with the strongest readership of the latter three papers is also over-represented in London and the South-East. Private schools in London/ROSE

recruited nearly 18% of their students from this neighbourhood type, 5% more than for surveyed UK schools as a whole. Scotland's private schools also over-recruited from this neighbourhood Type relative to the national average. North of the border, private schools also appear to have a similar geodemographic intake to London and the South-East in the Urban Prosperity Category (Figure 13). It is the Wealthy Achievers, a set of conservative, very affluent and largely suburban neighbourhoods, which dominate private school intakes across Britain with far larger percentages than the ACORN Groups account for in the general population (Table 2).

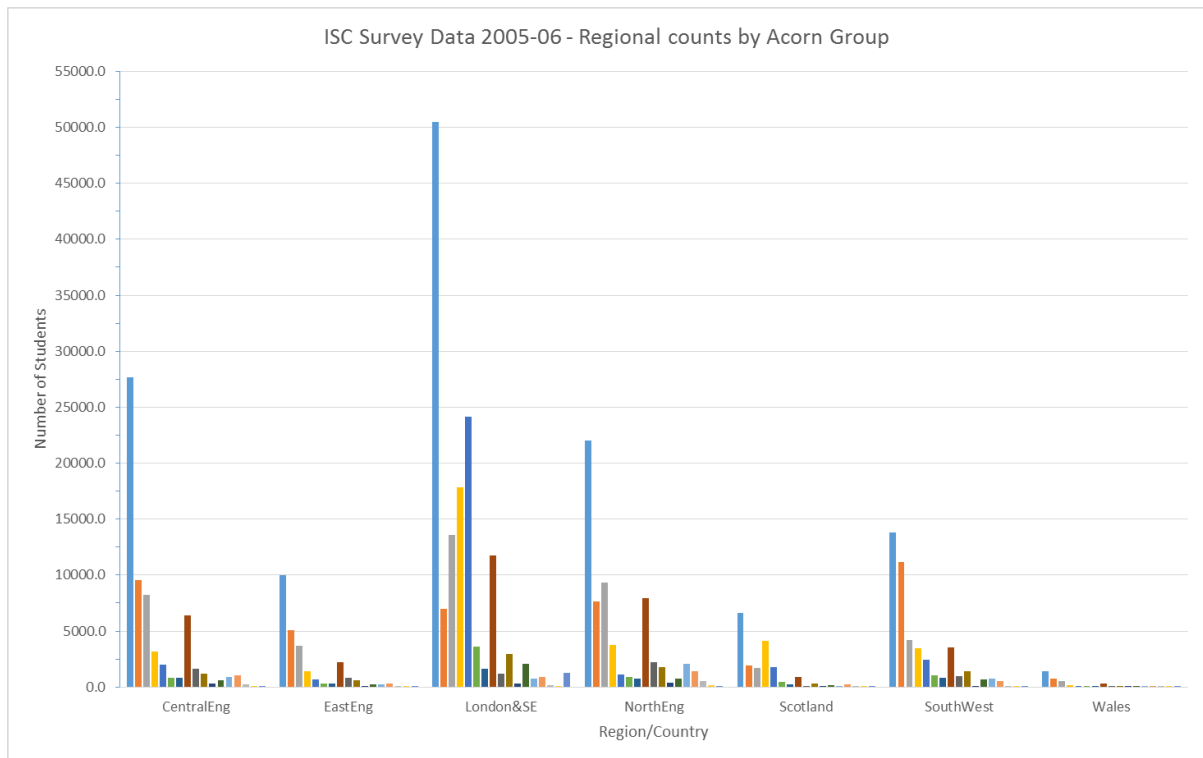


Figure 11 Graph showing the number of students from each Acorn Group in each region.

Data for figs. 11-14: (Independent Schools Council, 2006)

Key to Fig. 11-12: Acorn Groups numbered by Category (ordered left to right as displayed on both figures).

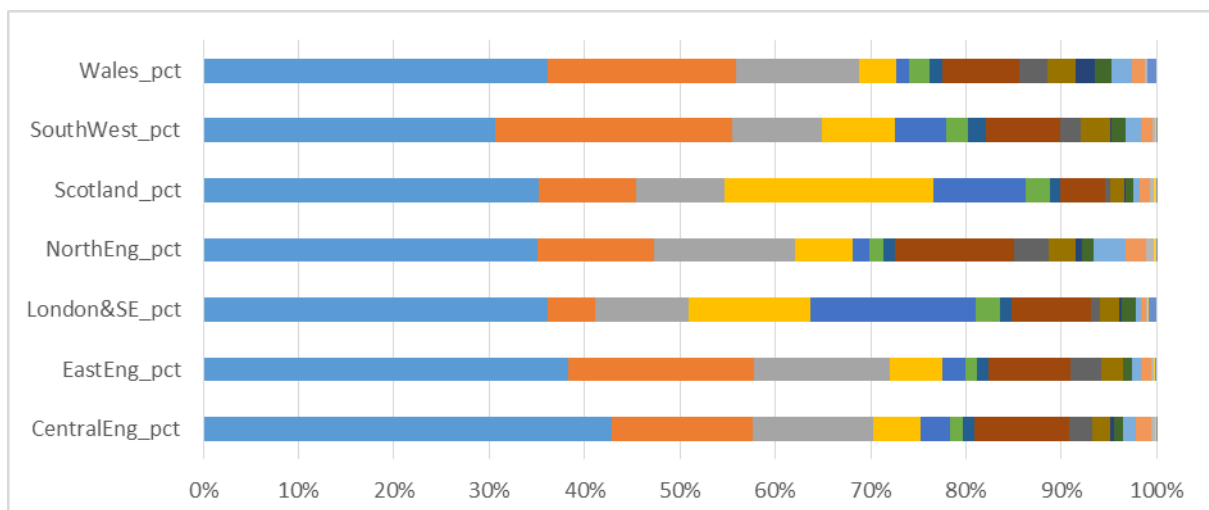
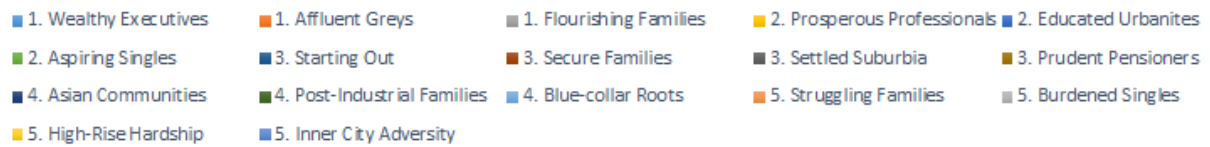


Figure 12 Graph showing the percentage of students from each Acorn Group as a proportion of the total for that region.

In absolute terms, the top three ACORN Groups (Wealthy Executives, Affluent Greys, Flourishing Families) are concentrated in schools in London/the South-East. However, the picture changes when we look at the percentage differences. We can see in Figure 12 that relatively speaking these three wealthy Groups are a much smaller percentage of the surveyed private school population compared to other UK regions. In fact these three elite geodemographic Groups form a smaller share of the surveyed school population in London/ROSE than in any other region, with Scotland having a similar distribution. Instead these two regions have schools which recruit substantially from urban professional neighbourhoods, particularly the Educated Urbanites and Prosperous Professionals. These are the most educated geodemographic Groups of the entire classification in terms of degree-level education. They are less wealthy, but generally better educated, than those in the three wealthier Groups; they have a strong preference for The Guardian over the Conservative-leaning alternatives. In all other regions, this demographic forms a far smaller percentage of the private school population, with the South-West coming closest. As the ACORN guide notes (CACI, 2007: 35-49), with the exception of some of the less affluent Types within these Groups, these mainly urban professional middle-class neighbourhoods tend to be a geodemographic phenomenon of certain commuter towns of the South-East, more affluent parts of Manchester, Cheshire, London and Edinburgh. It is, thus, not simply a suburban executive elite of London's periphery which dominates private schooling in the South-East but the metropolitan professional middle class too. Outside the South-East, with the exception of Scotland, private schools are more dependent on intake from the wealthiest suburban neighbourhoods with the metropolitan urban professional areas forming a far smaller share of intakes. Figure 13 underlines this division, comparing regional percentages of the three Acorn Groups in the Urban Prosperity Category to the national percentage for each group which provides the baseline. These findings reinforce arguments about the metropolitan persistence of the professional middle class as a distinctively urban grouping, historically concentrated in Manchester, Edinburgh and London (Savage et al., 1995: 44-45).

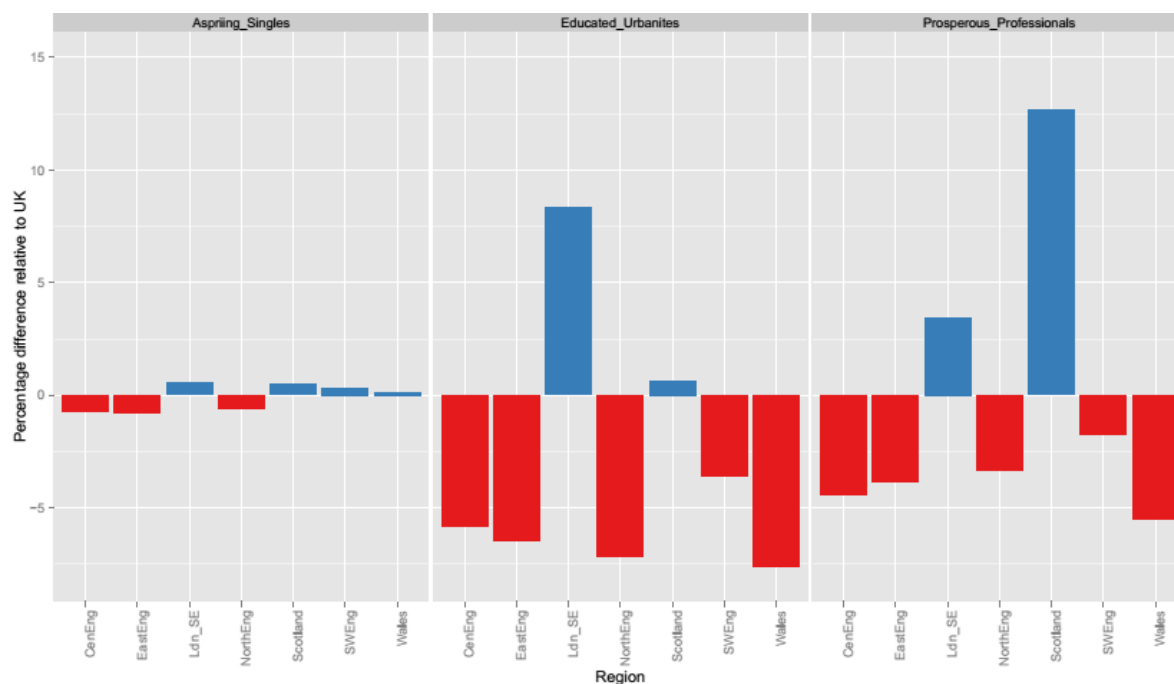


Figure 13 Graph comparing the percentage point difference between region and the UK average for Acorn Groups in the Urban Prosperity Category.

Explanatory note: national UK percentage of each Group for survey population provides the baseline (shown as 0). Aspiring Singles 2% of surveyed UK schools, Educated Urbanites 8.9%, Prosperous Professionals 9.3%.

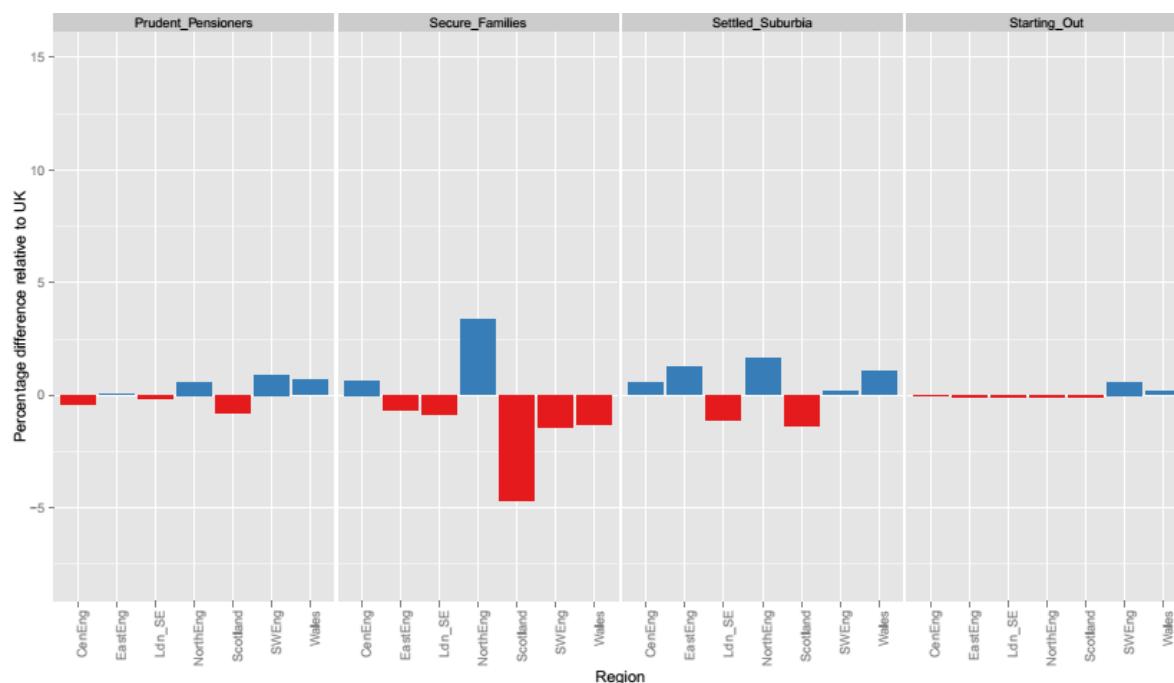


Figure 14 Graph comparing the percentage point difference between region and the UK average for Acorn Groups in the Comfortably-Off Category.

Baseline figures: Prudent Pensioners 2.9% of the surveyed UK schools, Secure Families 9.3%, Settled Suburbia 1.9%, Starting Out 1.3%.

These qualitative differences in intakes in the North of England and Wales (though small numbers may be problematic for Wales) compared to those in other regions are suggested again by figures 13-14. Private schools in Scotland and London/ROSE tend to recruit overwhelmingly from the suburban and metropolitan elite neighbourhoods. In contrast, both Wales (14% of surveyed private schools) and the North of England (19.1%) recruit a much larger share of their students from less affluent suburban lower middle-class family areas in the Comfortably-Off Category. Neighbourhoods in the Comfortably-Off Category tend to include families with stable middle-class employment, mortgages but much lower education levels than those in 'Wealthy Achiever' or 'Urban Prosperity' Groups and less frequent readership of broadsheets. Northern private schools thus recruit a larger share of their intake from these less affluent, less 'elite' cultural neighbourhoods. Interestingly, at the lowest sub-classification (Types) within the 'Comfortably-Off' Category, only one Acorn Type is overrepresented in London and the South-East, Home-owning Asian Family Areas (1.2% of the survey population nationally, 2.5% of students in the South-East). This Type has the highest readership of broadsheets of any of sister-neighbourhood Types in the 'Comfortably-Off' Category. It also has a particularly strong readership of The Financial Times, more than double the national average of all ACORN Types nationally. As will be examined in the following chapter, this finding concurs with a set of suburban British-Asian circuits of education around the capital and further suggests a particular set of British-Asian middle-class strategies towards schooling.

4.2.3 Private school participation and free school conversions – entrenched regional divisions since the crisis

Families from these less affluent suburban middle-class neighbourhoods in the North and Wales who use the private sector, may also have been particularly vulnerable to the economic shocks and shrinking public sector employment since the 2008 financial crisis. Trends in private school participation since the financial crisis reinforce the earlier findings of Coates and Rawstron (1971) and Bradford and Burdett (1989; 1990) who noted the clear cleavage between North and South in private school use. However, viewed in the context of the ACORN data, these trends also suggest how the provincial middle classes may have experienced the crisis differently. Pre-existing regional divisions in use of independent schools may have been exacerbated by the recession after 2008. Figures 15 and 16 show trends in regional private school participation as a percentage of all students and the absolute numbers of students in the private sector from 2007-2015. Figures 17 and 18 show

the same data but allow clearer analysis of individual regional trends at the cost of using scales which cannot be directly compared. For these graphs the grey area indicates the 95% confidence interval of the line of best fit from a third-order polynomial regression. Nationally, private school participation (across all age groups) peaked in 2009 at 7.22% and has been falling annually since then, reaching 6.90% for the academic year 2014-15. Despite this fall in market share, in absolute terms numbers have increased probably due to the size of recent birth cohorts and perhaps also due to international student recruitment. However these rising numbers have not been evenly geographically distributed with most of the growth in numbers coming from London (see Figure 17). Outside of the capital, only the South-East and the East of England have seen rising numbers. The North-West, South-West, North-East and to a lesser extent Yorkshire and the Humber and the East Midlands have seen significant drops in both absolute and percentage terms. Both Yorkshire and the Humber and the North-East showed signs of stabilisation or reversal of downward trends in the 2015 figures, but it is too early to see any clear change.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The role of international students within this is interesting with significant regional variation in private school recruitment since the crisis implying a deliberate recruitment strategy by schools in some areas (see appendix C).

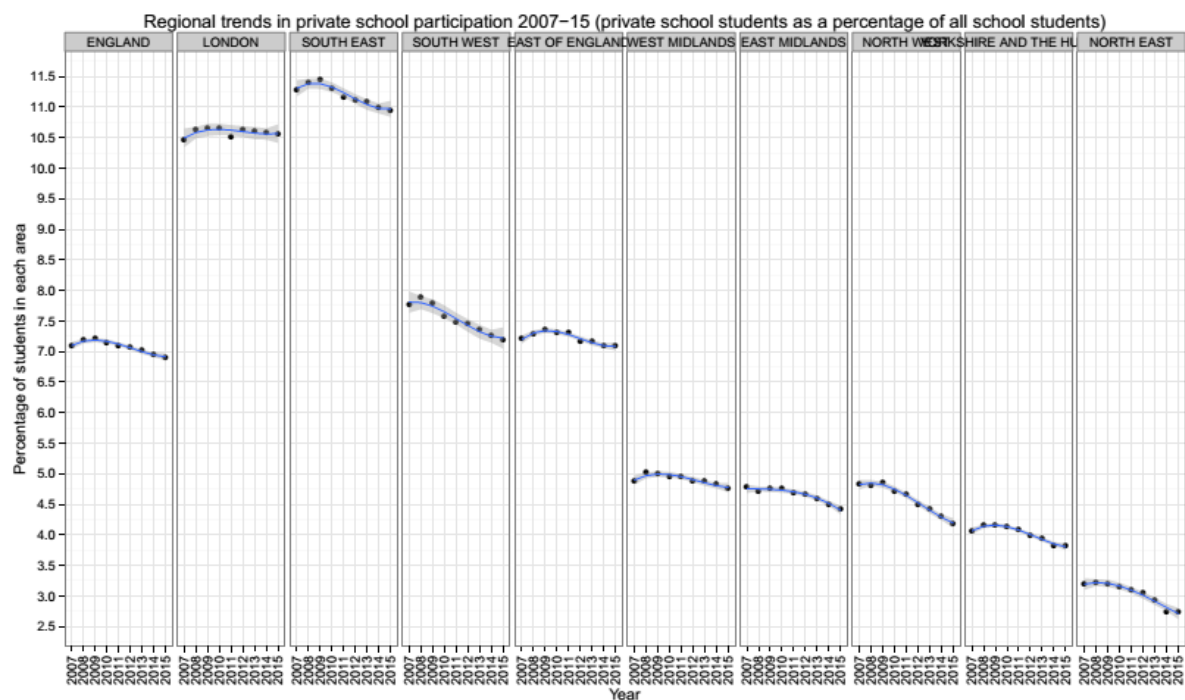


Figure 15 Regional trends in private school participation 2007-15 (private school students as a percentage of all school students)

Data for figs. 15-16: (DfE, 2015d).

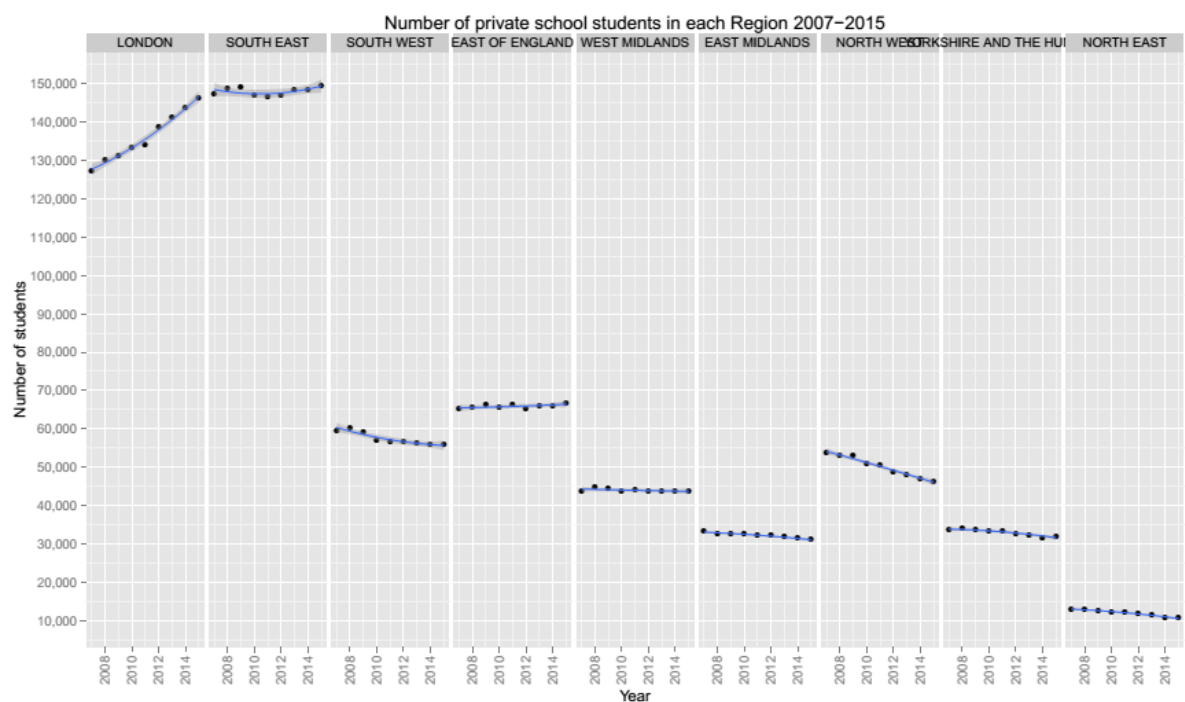


Figure 16 Number of private school students in each region 2007-15.

Note: England not shown here to avoid distorting the y axis, see Fig. 10

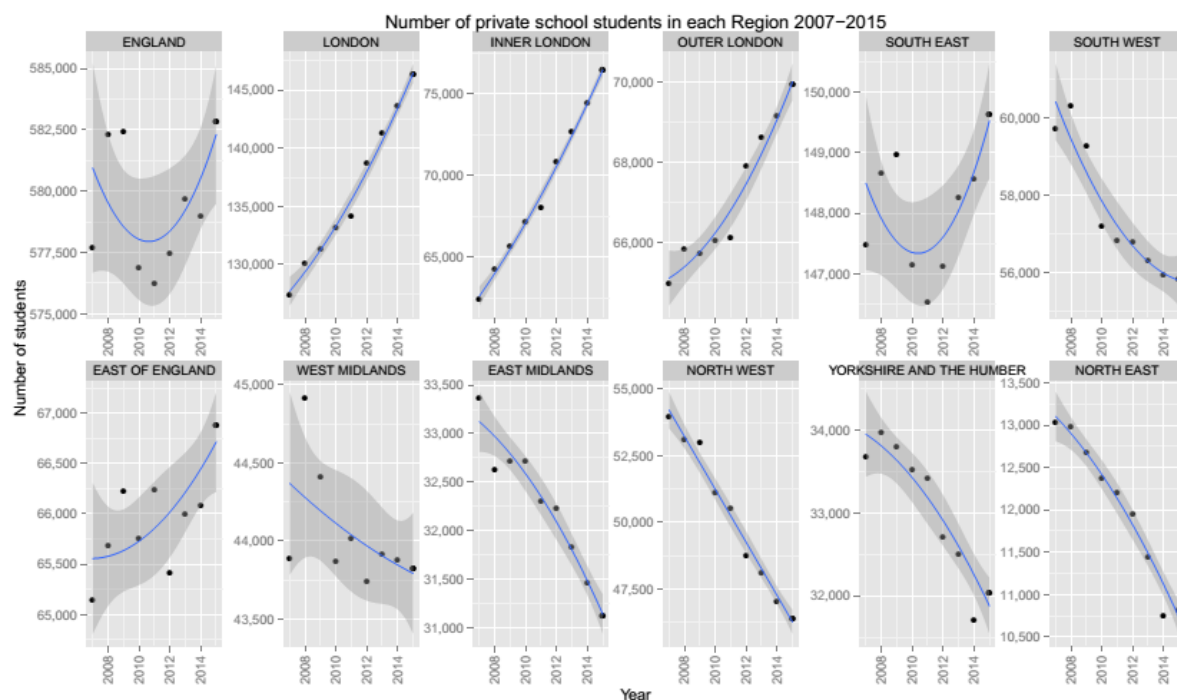


Figure 17 Number of private school students in each region 2007–15 with free y axes.

Note: Each graph must be interpreted individually here as scales vary by region.

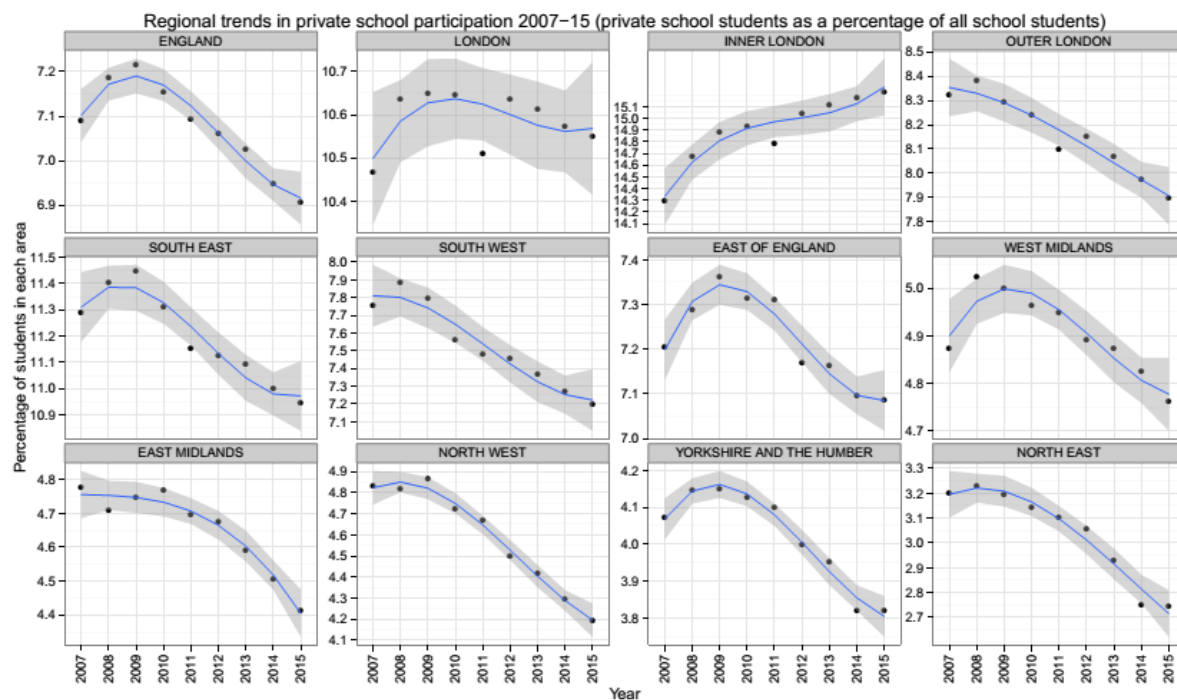


Figure 18 Regional trends in private school participation 2007–15.

These regional trends hide more complex local patterns which are visible at the LEA level (See appendix D). At this scale, trends more clearly reflect the health of individual school enrolments as many LEAs have only a handful of independent schools. In the North-West where the decline in private school participation has been sharpest, there have been several private school mergers and the conversion of three well-established private schools into state-funded Free Schools. These three, Liverpool College (2012: 5), Chetwynde School (2012: 15) and Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School Blackburn, all cited the economic situation as having affected parental ability to pay fees. Interestingly, Queen Elizabeth's (2013: 25-26), which had just 456 students at the time of their application, noted that 'under the Direct Grant and Assisted Places schemes, the school was at capacity with some 1200 pupils.' Similarly Liverpool College (2012: 10) noted that numbers reached 'a historic height of 1100' under the Assisted Places Scheme having fallen to 758 in the year before conversion. In West Yorkshire, Batley Grammar was one of the first wave of Free Schools and its application to convert provided detailed data on school rolls since the late 1980s. Batley Grammar, also formerly a Direct Grant grammar, had been heavily supported by the Assisted Places (AP) scheme with the share of AP students gradually rising between 1988 and 1998 to just over 50% of the intake. Numbers declined over the 2000s as the scheme was run down, and the school noted in its application the 'number of people able to afford fees in such a deprived area has always been limited.' Bradford and Burdett (1990: 41; 1989: 51) showed how the AP scheme had disproportionately gone to private schools in the North and, in the North-West, particularly to those schools which had previously held Direct Grant status.

This suggests a particular continuity within education policy: Free School conversion of private schools is effectively state-sponsorship of private schools which could otherwise risk bankruptcy. Both the AP scheme and Direct Grant status provided state subsidy of a particular form of secondary education associated with middle-class patterns of social reproduction and educational culture. Research examining the background of parents of children with Assisted Places found that the majority had attended either a grammar school or a fee-paying school. Whilst they met the financial criteria, they tended to be from 'middle-range occupations' not in manual working-class jobs (Fitz et al., 1986: 185-186), a significant proportion were families of the 'submerged middle class' (Jackson, 1962. Cited in: Douse, 1985: 215). On a smaller scale, the Free School conversions are playing a similar supportive role to weaker institutions within the private sector. This remains a minority phenomenon, only 16 schools have converted from the independent sector to become a Free School. Of

these, only seven were larger secondary or all-through schools but only one of the seven was not in the North of England.

As Batley Grammar's application implied, the financial vulnerability of these schools in turn probably reflects the restrained financial circumstances and smaller size of the provincial middle-class in certain areas, particularly in certain post-industrial Northern cities.

Sunderland's Grindon Hall School was another earlier converter and the Head's description of the intake further reinforces the geographical and social stratification of intakes in the private sector:

Grindon Hall was not, says Gray, "a posh private school". A typical parent might own a minibus taxi business depending on public sector work which, in the northeast, is contracting sharply as cuts bite. The school's roll dropped from 342 in 2006 to 241 in 2011; applications dwindled and pupils left. "I spent the last year wondering who was going to be the next parent to come and say they can't afford the fees."

(Tighe, 2013)

Elsewhere in the North-East, King's Priory School in North Tyneside was an early converter and two of Newcastle's girls' private secondary schools opted to merge in 2014. Mergers have provided an alternative solution for private schools struggling to stay afloat. Whilst mergers have occurred in other parts of the country, of the six private secondary schools with sixth forms which have closed as part of mergers since 2008, five were located in the North of England (i.e. all regions north of the East and West Midlands). A similar private school merger occurred in Blackpool, with falling numbers a key factor for two schools which now form AKS School in Lytham (Rogers, 2011). Shortly afterward, Blackpool also saw a smaller private preparatory convert to a Free School. Langdale School claimed in its Free School application:

Given the socio-economics of the area, Langdale already has a very diverse pupil base, very different from most other independent schools in the country. The parents of Langdale specifically, and the area in general, are not the 'sharp-elbowed, pushy middle-class parents' frequently demonised by opponents of the Free School model. Indeed quite the contrary. They are exactly the working/lower middle-class parents, struggling to make ends meet, starved of access to sufficient high-quality education for their children, that the policy is designed to support.

(Langdale Free School, 2012: 74)

Whilst this description is not accompanied by empirical evidence, the interpretation of the Free Schools policy is quite provocative. From this perspective, this particular segment of the Academy-Free Schools programme has a particular geographical class logic as the

independent to Free School conversions in the North result in partly from falling student numbers and the weakness of (lower) middle-class incomes. The state is stepping in to preserve institutions which, in the context of a much smaller private sector and relatively sparse numbers of grammar schools, are rarer in the North of England. These are institutions which like Chetwynde School (2012: 16) in the deprived South Lakes/Barrow-in-Furness area preserve the academic culture of the private sector; Chetwynde has far and away the highest percentage of students passing the EBacc compared to other state schools.⁴⁹ The head of the highly successful Royal Grammar School in Newcastle claimed that the school's future was ensured by the senior public professionals in the universities and health service who had not seen their incomes fall substantially during the crisis (Warrell, 2014). Whilst highly-paid public sector professionals are also present in private schools elsewhere in the country, this *reliance* on the local public sector elite and more vulnerable lower-middle class families suggests a distinct differentiation in the intake of private schools in the North compared to those in the South-East. The relationship between differentiated local class structures and private school closures, mergers or conversions is complex and further research is needed to examine this relationship in depth. However, viewed in the context of the geodemographic data and geographic trends in participation, there is significant evidence to suggest that regional differences in local class structures are affecting intakes and, by extension, the long- and short-term capacity of private schools to function without state support.

4.2.4 The fracturing of middle-class and elite social reproduction – fissures in the monolith

Rubinstein's comprehensive analysis of wealth and occupation over the 19th century provided stark evidence of the geographical economic dualism of the middle classes. In a less well-evidenced part of his argument, he also made claims about educational institutions, specifically Oxbridge and the public schools, being approached quite differently by the provincial and metropolitan middle classes. This dualism he saw as underpinned by the massive concentration of middle-class earners in London and its hinterland. London's share of middle-class incomes grew massively in the last third of the 19th century (Rubinstein, 1987b) which coincided with the considerable growth of the 'public school system' (Public

⁴⁹ The geography of EBacc success shows a clear bias towards London and the South-East whose local authorities have the highest percentage of state school students achieving the EBacc in the country (DfE, 2016). This requires further analysis, but it suggests distinctive geographical implications of the bias of school exam and curriculum reform towards 'traditional' and arguably elitist forms of study.

Schools Commission, 1968: 54). Whilst proprietary and endowed grammar schools served the provincial middle classes of the North, the major 'public schools', with their prestige and specific cultural tropes were concentrated in the South-East and across the South of England more broadly. Bryce (1868: 585-589) in his examination of schooling for the middle class in Lancashire noted how 'Rossall⁵⁰ is the only representative in the county of what is vulgarly called the "public school" system' noting also that it 'is the only school of its class in the north of England'. Clearly there is no direct equivalence between these findings and the contemporary situation of what are now commonly called 'independent schools' and the current middle classes; to draw blunt parallels would be to overlook a century of social, economic and cultural change.

Nevertheless, drawing on this historical material suggests the deep economic and socio-cultural roots of the field of schooling in England and the geographical divides which structure the field itself and access to elite universities. The Methodist, dissenting antipathy towards Anglican public schools is no longer a major factor in influencing contemporary attitudes towards private schooling in the North, though Anglican faith remains a component of institutional culture in many of the older southern public schools. However, the trends in private school participation, the distribution of Oxbridge access and the spatial segmentation of geodemographic intakes reveals the powerful spatial divisions which frame the educational infrastructure of elite and middle-class social reproduction and the circuits which run through it. It is the persistent re-definition and mutation of the nexus of institutions that lies behind Shils' 'London-Oxford-Cambridge axis', and the outward and downward diffusion of the educational culture it promotes, which most clearly defines the field of elite and middle-class schooling over the last 150 years. This axis rests on a regional social and spatial rift which it is also a key element in maintaining. However, the socio-economic constellation on which this infrastructure of social reproduction rests is not static or unquestionably permanent.

This fragility of the private sector in the North of England underlines both the geographic hierarchy and differentiation within the independent school system, and by proxy, the historically differentiated nature of the middle classes within the UK. Despite the stability and growth of private school numbers and participation in the South-East, the conventional institutional role of private schools as the key sites of middle-class and elite social

⁵⁰ Then one of the few, if not the only, Anglican boys boarding school in the North of England.

reproduction is not as stable as it may seem. Anderson (1964) and Nairn (1964) saw the public school system as having provided a cultural linchpin which bound together the old and new aristocratic, industrial and commercial/financial bourgeois elites with the rising professional middle classes from the late 19th century onward, forming a new elite. Nairn (2011: 243) later fleshed out the geography within which this elite educational infrastructure worked, describing the 'Crown Heartland' as 'a Southern-lowland hegemonic bloc uniting an hereditary élite to the central processing block of commercial and financial capital.' It is tempting to see the mergers, free school conversion and falling numbers of provincial and particularly Northern private schools as simply representing the fundamental economic weakness of the fractions of the middle class outside of the South-East; Northern/provincial private school decline would thus form part of 'a cumulative slide on a gradient whose contours were decided centuries ago' (Nairn, 2011: 249). However, to do so would be to overlook the broader fractures within the contemporary middle classes, even in the South-East of England.

Perhaps the greatest threat to the role of private schools in structuring the field of education and the reproduction of the middle classes and elites more generally comes from the fracturing of middle-class incomes and long-term above-inflation rises in school fees. As the above analysis suggests, there has always been a spatial division to middle-class cultural identities, economic status and educational preferences. In terms of private schooling, several reports have flagged the growth in private school costs over the past 30 years which have dwarfed inflation rises and salary growth, including amongst professional middle-class occupations (Centre for Economic and Business Research, 2014; 2015). For 2014-15, the average annual cost of day fees would account for 50% of the average solicitor's salary, rising to 60% for accountants and nearly 70% for academics (Centre for Economic and Business Research, 2015: 8). This rise in fees has been driven in part by an arms race to improve facilities and teaching involving huge outlays of millions of pounds, a 'flight to quality' (Peel, 2015: 238) which has also been replicated in the super-state schools described in the following chapter.⁵¹ Single-wage professional families on an average income would thus struggle to afford private schooling with dual wage-earning reducing this burden. Even professionals in the top 25% of earners (the salary of the 75th percentile) would still pay around 30% of an annual disposable income (Ibid). This phenomenon is not

⁵¹ At KHS, a swimming pool and new library have been funded through donations and the use of the small endowment from the original 16th century foundation. Similarly at HBS in West Hampstead, new building has also involved substantial donations, I will discuss this culture of donations in the following chapter.

new (Garner, 2007), but recent academic work has highlighted growing gaps in the incomes of higher socio-occupational classes. Savage (2015a) highlighted the splintering of incomes, as NS-SEC 1, (higher managerial and professional occupations), have become wealthier leaving average incomes of NS-SEC 2, (lower managerial and professional occupations), closer to the other NS-SEC classes. Bell and Machin (2014) provided further evidence of this, revealing how teachers, academics and architects have largely slipped out of the top 5% of earners, replaced by finance workers and management consultants. This new 'uber-middle' class, largely working in London (Neville, 2014), bears easy parallel to Piketty's (2014: 302, 314-316) 'super-managers' who have seen their share of national income rocket over the last three decades. It is this fraction of earners, combined with the high-net worth individuals (HNWIs) from abroad, who can easily stomach the above average inflation fee rises in the private sector. It is less clear how or whether professional middle class parents who may have used fee-paying schools in the past will be able to do so in future.

In this contemporary context it is not only the private schools of the North which may see their role changing, but those in the 'Crown Heartland' itself. For less well-established schools rising fees, falling rolls and the abolition of the AP scheme resulted in mergers of smaller schools in Winchester, Bedford, Malvern and Oxfordshire between 2006 and 2012 (Peel, 2015: 54-55). It is unlikely that this will mean the undoing of the central dynamic of the formation of the British elite at the apex of the private school system in the South-East. But the long-term rise of the 'super-state' schools of London should also be viewed against the backdrop of rises in tuition fees and the inability of middle-class incomes to keep up. The strategy of buying into school catchment areas which has been present since the 1970s but has intensified over the last 25 years is discussed in greater detail in chapter 8, and should also be seen partly in this light. Indeed, fears that private schools were pricing themselves out of their own market through inflation-busting fee increases date back to the early 1980s for boarding schools (Peel, 2015: 36-37). What has happened over the intervening decades is that this issue of financial threats to survival has begun to affect day schools too. Fundamentally, this is a question of the financial cost of social reproduction for the middle classes and this will affect the sites, i.e. the schools, where this occurs. This does not mean that the geographical locus for this process will shift away from London/ROSE but rather that the demographic from which public schools recruit, particularly at the top-end where fees are highest, may change. The 'regulating institutions of assimilation [into the elite]', as Anderson (1964: 33) refers to the public schools, will likely remain the same, but who will they be assimilating? It seems highly unlikely that the symbolic and cultural power of Oxford, Cambridge and the cluster of elite schools in the South-East will change, and their cultural

attraction and influence in terms of school practices and curriculum will likely continue to extend into the state sector.

There are, though, risks for private schools of continuing with fee rises which are only affordable to the 'super-managers' of London and the children of foreign HNWIs and the fact that this is a matter of concern even for well-established private schools in the South-East (Turner, 2015: 251-256) brings this into focus. A central issue is legitimacy, and drives to extend and professionalise fundraising in the private sector since the late 1990s (Peel, 2015: 47-48) have partly been directed towards offering bursary provision with the explicit intention of replacing subsidies previously provided by the AP scheme (Davies et al., 2010: 23-24, 30-31). Interestingly, Davies *et al.* (2010) also suggest that, perhaps by necessity given differentiated parental incomes, it is the smaller, less high-attaining or historically elite schools that spend a larger share of their income supporting bursaries and fee remissions for students. Whilst data on who receives these bursaries is hard to come by, some of the wealthier schools offer fee remission to parents who are by no means poor. Whitgift School (2016) in South London offers an £8,000 fee remission to families with a household income of £63,000 with King Edwards School Birmingham (2016) offering very similar support. Much as the original AP scheme was found to be largely benefitting less-affluent but still highly-educated middle-class parents (Fitz et al., 1986), the same is potentially true of these contemporary schemes. There is in effect still a need to subsidise middle-class entry to the private sector and it is hard to see how this 'need' will decrease in the future. The broader issue of the fracturing of the middle class economically and geographically and the varying fates of private schooling since the crisis, suggests a continuing form of socio-spatial dualism of the middle-classes in educational terms and the power of the London-Oxford-Cambridge axis remain central to shaping the field of post-16 and the field of education and social reproduction more broadly. Rising fees and the specific geographies of private schooling examined here, also suggests how the broad and varied infrastructure of elite and middle-class social reproduction is not monolithic and is not without significant, and perhaps growing, fissures in its edifice.

4.3 Part Two: the fields of post-16 in London and Sheffield a networks approach

Within this interwoven national hierarchy of post-16 institutions and regional class dynamics, there are subtler local hierarchies of prestige and attainment with institutions acting as conduits to certain university types. One means of examining how these post-16 institutions

are segmented is through an analysis of which universities they send students to. This provides a means of examining both the institution's position within the local field of post-16 and the circuits of education at work within a particular area. The following sub-sections provide an analysis of field and circuits using the SNA approach, which I discuss in detail below, to explore hierarchies in London and Sheffield.

The SNA techniques used in this section allow us to mesh together an analysis of institutional hierarchy and prestige with an investigation of the socio-spatial patterns of reproduction, i.e. circuits of education, within which students' everyday experiences and decisions are embedded. Bourdieu's theory of field provides a frame for observing how hierarchical positions of actors or institutions within a particular social arena are structured by the possession of different types and volumes of capitals. In contrast, circuits of education have been conceived as the collective socio-spatial pathways through the school system that vary depending on race, gender, class and location. For this section in particular, I will approach circuits descriptively, seeking to reveal the patterns themselves rather than the decision-making processes and experiences which lie behind them. Moreover, the patterning of these circuits by race, class and gender are not shown directly using this method, I focus instead on how circuits link particular schools/colleges and universities, shaping institutional hierarchies as they do so. These social factors structuring the differences between circuits will be examined in chapters five and six where the geographical specificity of circuits both within and between London and Sheffield will also be discussed.

As I have outlined in the previous sections of this chapter, schools and colleges at the post-16 stage are situated within both a national and a local hierarchy or field. To the extent that schools are compared nationally by governments, the press and parents, this is also true at earlier stages of education. However, for students themselves it is at this point that it becomes abundantly clear that the exam system is a site for *national* competition for particular places at universities. An advantage of the SNA approach is that it allows us to visualise these circuits, showing how particular schools and universities are connected. Moreover, it allows us to visualise the structure of the field on post-16 institutions along this dimension of students attending elite universities. De Nooy (2003: 319-320) argued that symbolic capital can sometimes be observed by proxy through the interactions between individuals, and that the recognition of power relations within a field can depend on the symbolic value of flows of individuals between certain nodes or institutions. In what follows I treat the 'circuits' connecting particular schools and universities as forms of symbolic capital,

analysing the hierarchy of positions within the field on the basis of which schools send students to which universities. The particular methods used allow an analysis of 'communities', a term which I will discuss below in detail, of schools and universities within the field of post-16, suggesting a particular hierarchy of schools and colleges at the point of transition to university. It thus reveals how the field of post-16 is structured in terms of circuits – revealing which post-16 institutions tend to feed into which universities and allows us to infer from this the structure of the field of post-16 and the dynamics of particular sub-fields within that.

4.3.1 Methodological considerations

A second element of De Nooy's (2003) argument for a SNA approach to Bourdieu's conception of field, describes how SNA has strong parallels with the correspondence analysis methods adopted by Bourdieu. The use of particular algorithms to examine different elements of the structure of a network are similar to the multidimensional scaling methods also used by Bourdieu (Brandes, 2001. In: De Nooy, 2003: 313-314). It is not only the algorithms and spacing methods which bear similarities – the bipartite networks analysed here can also be examined using factor and Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) analysis methods to understand the latent structure of the network (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005). A bi-partite graph is formed of a network with two different types of nodes, in this case schools and universities, with edges connecting schools to universities but not universities to universities or schools to schools. The schools and colleges shown here indicate where students study for post-16 *if* they attend HE.

As well as drawing on these methodological neighbours to Bourdieu's Multiple Correspondence Analysis, modularity analysis techniques are also used to detect the structure of clusters of institutions within the field of post-16. Modularity analysis is a method for discovering how networks are organised in clusters or 'communities' of nodes. Within these communities there are a greater number of links or edges between members of the community than to other nodes within the network than would be expected at random (Fortunato, 2010: 85-86). In this context, the communities suggest particular clusters of schools/colleges and universities with the strongest numerical ties between each other. It is also necessary to account for the significance of the suggested communities (Traag et al., 2013: 2), the OSLOM2 method developed by Lancichinetti *et al.* (2010; 2011) allows this. This method has the advantage of accounting for directed- and weighted-ness in graphs, as

well as indicating which nodes hold an overlapping position within two or more communities. Importantly it also provides a test of statistical significance for each community. The threshold for significance set by Lancichinetti et al. (2011: 14) is 0.1 which they find to perform well on the benchmarks tests for assessing modularity. In the graphs produced here, all the modules meet this threshold of significance.

As this network is bi-partite, a slightly different set of modularity analysis methods must also be used. As Fortunato (2010: 82) suggests, bipartite graphs often require an 'ad hoc' approach combining a range of different approaches. The SVD analysis approaches already discussed are both designed to cope with bipartite networks in the UCINET software package. The OSLOM2 method does not adjust for this and as Barber (2007: 2) notes, accounting for the bipartite nature of the graph is important in considering the statistical significance of any modularity analysis. To account for the bi-partite nature of the graph, Dorman and Strauss' (2013; 2014) techniques were used to provide an alternative measure of modularity which accounts for two-mode (i.e. bi-partite) data. Using their 'Bipartite' package in R, it was also possible to compare the Q-value, which provides a measure of the modularity in the graph as a whole, to null models which account for the bi-partite nature of the data. The Q-value Dorman and Strauss (2013: 4) adopt is that outlined for weighted bipartite networks by Barber (2007) and it varies between 0 and 1, with a higher Q indicating greater evidence of network division into modules. However, as Fortunato (2010: 111-112) has argued, this a high Q-value does not necessarily indicate statistically significant modularity. These Q-values must be compared with several runs of modularity values for a randomized version of the same graph. This then provides the distance in units of the standard deviation between Q in the actual graph and Q from the null model average with a customary cut-off value, a z-score, of 2-3 standard deviations. For both Sheffield and London this was shown to be statistically significant.⁵²

As with cluster analysis techniques (Boliver, 2015: 615), these analyses are iterative and exploratory, with community structure tending to vary slightly between runs (Dormann and Strauss, 2013: 13). As well as the methods described here, the graphs were also analysed in Gephi and Pajek, though only the OSLOM2 and "Bipartite" package approaches provide a measure of statistical significance. The findings from the OSLOM2 method are referred to below and also used in subsequent chapters with reference to the structure of the field of

⁵² Sheffield, $q = 0.18$, $z\text{-score} = 6.15$. London, $q=0.20$, $z\text{-score} = 16.52$.

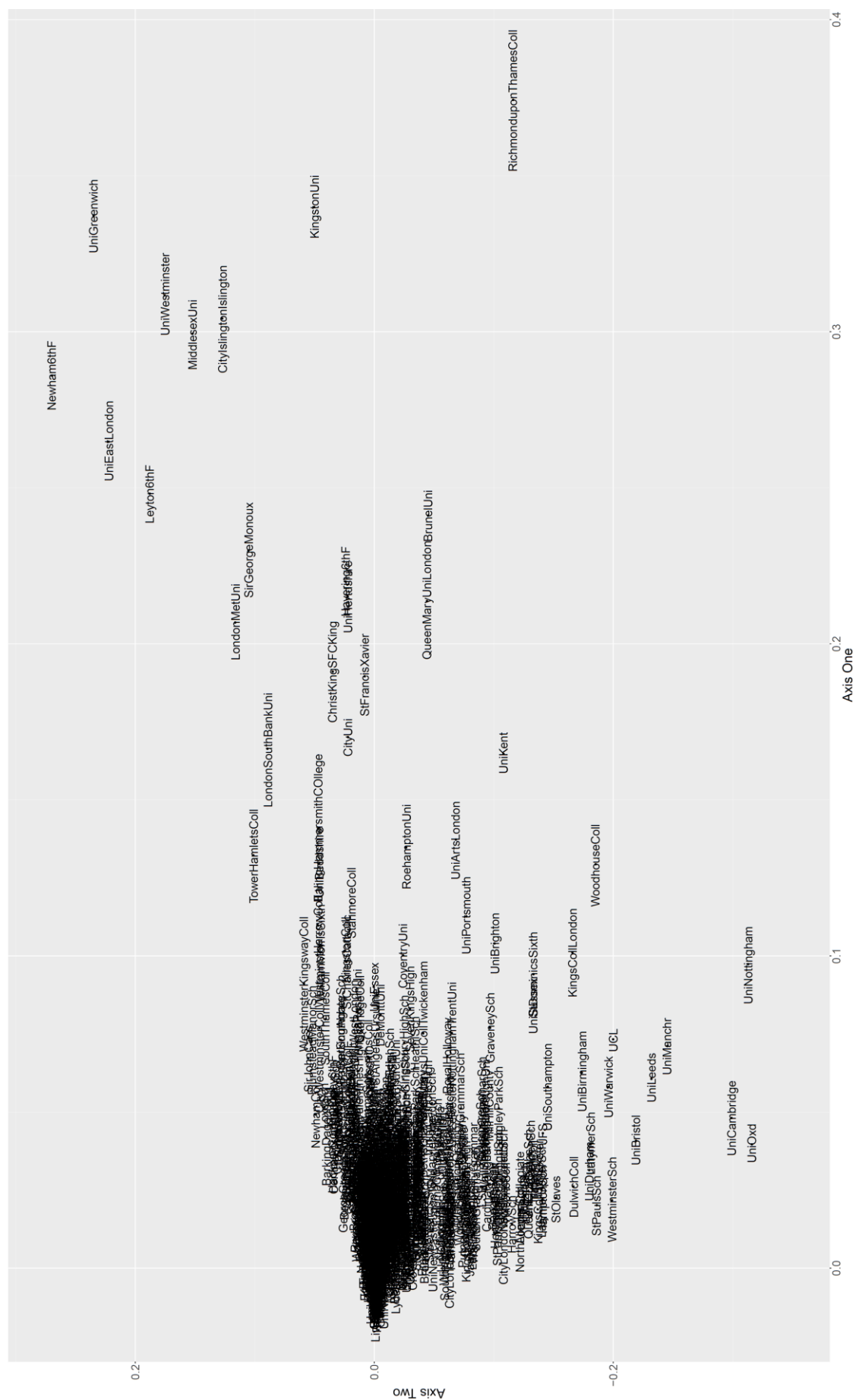
post-16. Despite the methodological limitations of the OSLOM2 method, it suggested a structure of both fields of post-16 which had the strongest similarity to the qualitative evidence which follows. This approach also contributes to analyses which have sought to classify universities using various clustering techniques (Dolton and Makepeace, 1982; Boliver, 2015). Unlike Boliver's (2015) work, these social network techniques do not use descriptive variables about the institutions in question to examine the hierarchical structure of the field of HE. What these methods allow us to do is to see how circuits of education are segmented, with specific schools or colleges acting as the primary conduit for a particular university/universities. These circuits in turn suggest a specific hierarchy of institutions with schools and colleges effectively positioned within their local field depending on which universities they are mainly connected to. In what follows, I first examine how circuits position these institutions within the field using the SVD technique and then analyse how the structure of the networks, and the fields, suggested by the SVD method is confirmed by the modularity approach. The modularity analysis suggests a more distinct classification of institutions and a more clearly sub-divided structure of the field of institutions at the post-16 to university transition.

4.3.2 Understanding the structure of the network – elite circuits of national prestige and 'democratic' local post-1992 circuits

The SVD analysis suggests two axes for colleges and schools in London *and* Sheffield which reveal a similar structure to the field of post-16 in both cities. They reflect a fundamental division within circuits of education at the post-16 to HE transition. Educational expansion has frequently meant that socio-economic differences in accessing education has become more dependent on qualitative differences between institutions rather than access to (higher) education in an absolute sense (Lucas, 2001; Boliver, 2011a). A characteristic 'constraining condition' of education in England has been differentiation – covert and overt forms of selection maintaining and accentuating institutional hierarchy and social division (Johnson, 1989: 97-98). In this case, what is most strongly suggested by the SVD analysis is the maintenance of the binary division in HE. In fact, this binary divide, between what is now called the 'Russell Group' of universities and the 'new' post-1992 universities, is not limited to HE. Rather, what the results examined below suggest is that as the post-16 and HE systems developed in tandem as participation grew, forming a binary axis of post-16 to HE with substantial selection at 16 forming a *de facto* '16-plus' in the non-selective state sector. The key division which remains powerfully salient is between further education and sixth

form colleges which remain strongly coupled to *local* post-1992 universities and the more socially and academically selective older elite universities with a national recruitment and most strongly associated with elite state and private schools and the sixth form system. What has effectively been maintained is not just a binary divide on entry to HE but a system where this separation is prescribed by an earlier divide at post-16. The polarised nature of the network reflects the divided hierarchical structure of the field itself and the distinct segmentation of circuits of education at post-16 according to institution-type.

Figure 19 Singular Value Decomposition analysis of University Destinations (2011-12 entry) for Schools in London



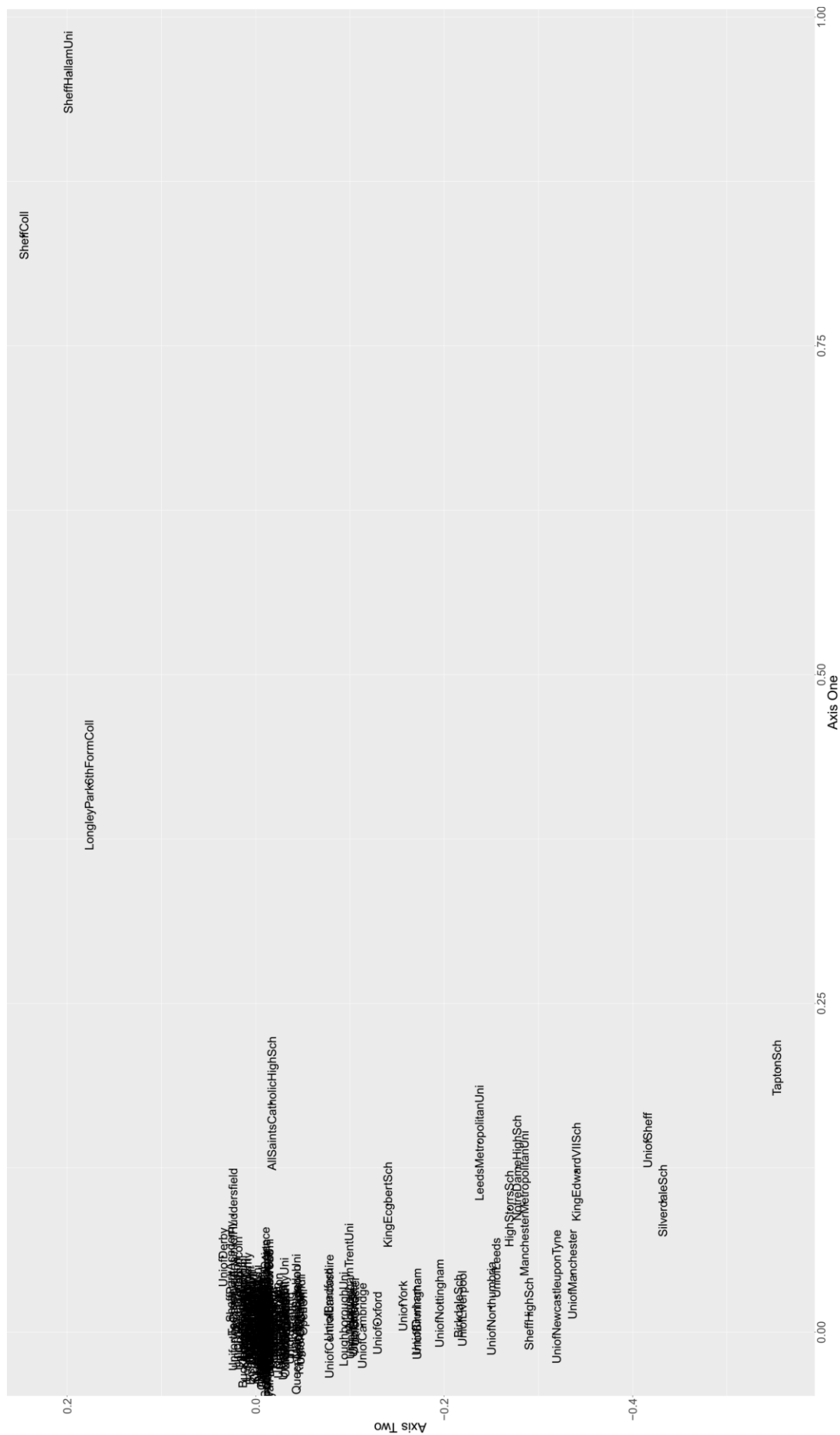


Figure 20 Singular Value Decomposition analysis of University Destinations (2011-12 entry) for Schools in Sheffield

Both graphs plot the institutions in the space of the variance of the bi-partite matrices which form the networks of post-16 to HE in London and Sheffield. The 'singular values' which form the axes of the graph can be considered as similar to factors in more conventional methods for analysing clustering of data (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005). As such each axis accounts for a particular percentage of the variance between institutions in the respective matrix. In both figures (Figure 19 and Figure 20), the analysis takes the first two singular values as the dimensions against which the institutions are then plotted. For London (Figure 19), the first two dimensions (x, y in the plot) account for 12.5% and 6.5% of the variance, for Sheffield (Figure 20) these figures are considerably higher, 62% and 11.5%, for reasons that will be returned to below. In both graphs the structure of post-16 to HE circuits is fundamentally similar in institutional terms. The x axis seems to structure the institutions along an axis of local recruitment and probably lower attainment for more students, with the big FE and Sixth Form Colleges sending very large numbers of students to local post-1992 institutions on the right of the axis. In contrast the second dimension is clearly associated with institutional selectivity, high attainment and prestige, with the Russell Group institutions, private schools and certain state schools located at the bottom of the axis – the furthest possible point from the local FE to post-1992 cluster. Between these two poles, clustered around the 0 point of both graphs, are the bulk of schools and universities, which have less distinctive patterns of school to HE circuits and are situated in between these two hierarchical poles of the field.

Within London, the hierarchy suggested above clearly applies. The majority of schools with smaller sixth forms concentrated in the dense cluster close to the zero point of both axes. These are schools with smaller sixth forms which do not send large numbers of students to either the Russell Group institutions or the *local*, London post-1992 institutions. In the elite cluster the schools are not only the conventional private schools but also a number of 'super-state' schools which act as large scale state-funded conduits to a national system of elite universities. Interestingly there are groups of institutions which sit between these two poles of recruitment. Woodhouse and St Dominic's Sixth Form Colleges sit on the edge of the elite cluster but are also clearly involved with, or at least less insulated from, local London circuits of FE to post-1992 transitions. Similarly Richmond upon Thames College, although clearly oriented towards the local FE/1992 circuit, has a negative value on the y axis, indicating the presence of students attending the Russell Group institutions of the lower half. In these cases, what these positions indicate is the dual role of these institutions, offering larger numbers of BTEC and alternative qualifications to the A-level model and catering for a larger number of students with lower A-level results. For Woodhouse College this was also reflected in student perceptions of the college during interviews. Students in both the private

and elite 'super-state' schools, and the FE and sixth form colleges saw it as an institution which was potentially an option for them. However, for students from non-selective state schools in inner-city areas accessing Woodhouse College was seen as difficult with its academic selectivity on entry and emphasis of its links to Oxbridge. The relative paucity of this dual-facing role amongst London's 'super-state' 'comprehensive' schools underlines a key difference with the Sheffield where the suburban comprehensives which dominate the local field of schooling are also closely linked to local post-1992 universities.

The Sheffield graph (Figure 20) confirms the pattern seen in the London network. Again the axes seem to operate on two dimensions with two clear clusters, a local, FE/post-1992 grouping and then the city's suburban state schools and its two private schools forming another cluster with the Russell Group universities. There are some important differences which mark out a clear contrast in how the field of post-16 operates at the point of entry to HE in a provincial urban school system like Sheffield. Firstly, for universities the most positive values on the x axis come from Sheffield Hallam ($x=0.958$) with the University of Sheffield ($x=0.146$) and the other Lancashire, Yorkshire and North Midlands universities having the next strongest positive values. This reflects the strength of local HE choice in Sheffield with large numbers of students opting to attend universities in the region (HEFCE, 2015). It is also worth noting that Sheffield Hallam University and also Sheffield College ($x=0.854$) have much higher values on the x axis which accounts for a very high (62%) of the variance within the space as a whole. There is very strong 'institutional coupling' (Weick, 1976) between the two institutions with 210 students moving from the college to Sheffield Hallam in the cohort, far higher than any similar FE college in London where students are more spread across a larger number of newer universities.

In Sheffield then, there is a very strong role of these local circuits in shaping the structure of the network and the large numbers of students opting to study locally in Sheffield at Sheffield Hallam which affects the hierarchy of institutions. There is a strong local dimension to HE choice in London too, what seems to be different however, is the numbers of students attending regional post-1992 institutions from schools in closer proximity to the Russell Group universities. The position of Manchester and Leeds Metropolitan Universities closer to the suburban state schools of South-West Sheffield reflects how these high-attaining sixth forms operate a dual role as both institutions linked into national circuits of middle-class spatial mobility and social reproduction, and institutions offering less high-attaining more often working-class students and students of colour access to more local post-1992

institutions. It suggests that the 'super-state' schools found in London are not paralleled in a city like Sheffield, where sought-after state schools are also closer to the local-regional post-1992 HE sector. It might be hypothesised that this is in part due to less segregated access to these institutions in absolute terms, with the smaller numbers of the cultural capital rich urban middle-class professionals producing schools in the state sector which are less clearly dominated by transitions into Russell Group universities. This dual role for the school sixth forms of south west Sheffield as well as the strength of Sheffield Hallam's recruitment also means that the intermediate group of colleges, schools and universities which are situated between the two poles in London (Figure 19) are largely absent in Sheffield with the exception of one of the local catholic schools, All Saints. Sheffield's field of post-16 is thus in a sense both more and less polarised than London's, with a clear and stark division between the local, FE/SFC to Hallam circuit and the suburban comprehensives and the city's two private schools all of which offer narrow circuits to older more prestigious universities alongside links to local post-1992 institutions. What is completely absent in Sheffield is the elite feeder school to Oxbridge type relationship or the 'super-state' school with a much more exclusive position closer to the Russell Group institutions. In this sense at least, Sheffield can claim to have a more egalitarian system without the elite feeder schools, both state and private, that exist in London.

These subtle differences are important, as they suggest how hierarchies within urban school systems relate to broader regional hierarchies of economic and cultural power. However, this should not mean that we overlook the structural similarities between the two fields that is suggested by the SVD analysis. Hierarchies within the two fields of post-16 are formed primarily by two circuits of education with a clear division between two sets of institutions that are most strongly oriented by these circuits. The set of circuits suggested by the cluster on the left, lower segment of each space and particularly in the London space of the network, are national, primarily elite and middle-class circuits between 'super-state'/private schools and Russell Group universities. These circuits are national in their functioning, especially in London, relying in part on the normative middle-class assumptions around spatial mobility and a university experience away from home (Patiniotis and Holdsworth, 2005; Holdsworth, 2006; 2009). Counter-posed to this are the institutions in the top right segment, the FE-local post-1992 university circuits. University expansion through the 1992 reforms has seemingly largely reinforced divisions in the structure of post-16 education. Twenty five years on, it is via the FE system where access to HE really occurs for most 'non-traditional' HE students. Though it is not possible to show this here, the circuits of education involved are partly prescribed by a preference to remain living locally in much the same way

as was the case in the original 'circuits of schooling' research (Ball et al., 1995). This group of students opting to study locally is also strongly associated with FE Colleges as well as working-class students, and Bangladeshi-heritage women in particular (MORI, 2005; UCAS, 2008; Gibbons and Vignoles, 2009; Gamsu, 2012). Whilst many schools lie in-between the two poles suggested by the SVD analysis, it is clearly the FE system which are conduits for the more 'democratic' circuits of education. Alongside less well-established school sixth forms, they provide truly 'comprehensive' provision at post-16 level despite substantial funding cuts. For those 'comprehensive' schools in London's elite cluster, their nomination is misleading and underlines the subversion of the original political intentions of comprehensive reform under particular urban conditions of class formation. This is also true in Sheffield as will become clear in later chapters, but there are significant differences which suggest school sixth forms in Sheffield's middle-class neighbourhoods remain considerably more 'comprehensive' in relation to their HE destinations as will now be examined.

4.3.3 Modularity analysis – ‘communities’ and hierarchical sub-fields within the post-16 to HE transition

The SVD analysis suggests two distinctive clusters, but does not allow us to visualise the flows of students, i.e. the circuits, between different institutions. Furthermore, the two clusters suggested above are not clearly delineated into distinct groups but rather stem from an interpretation of the space of each graph. A modularity analysis approach allows us to see how these circuits form ‘communities’ of institutions which reinforces the notion of distinctive sub-fields of institutions within the post-16 to HE transition. Combining this method with spacing algorithms allows us to interpret how patterns of post-16 to HE circuits situate institutions within each local field. For both London and Sheffield, the OSLOM2 modularity analysis algorithm was run to produce the communities of institutions with stronger ties to each other than to the rest of the network. These were then combined with two spacing algorithms. The first, Fruchterman-Reingold (1991) , attempts to draw nodes which are connected by an edge close together whilst minimizing edge crossings. This provides a useful visualisation for viewing the groups suggested by the modularity analysis. It also corroborates the modularity analysis for reasons which will become clear. OpenOrd in contrast, instead operates by gradually “cutting” edges of lower weight (i.e. the circuits with smaller numbers of students) and increasing the space between nodes which have lower edge weight (Martin et al., 2011). By cutting edges in this way, more distinctive clustering within each of the modularity classes become visible. The modularity classes produced in OSLOM2 or the sub-fields they are taken to represent, are referred to in subsequent chapters to suggest a structure of the field of post-16 in relation to HE destinations.

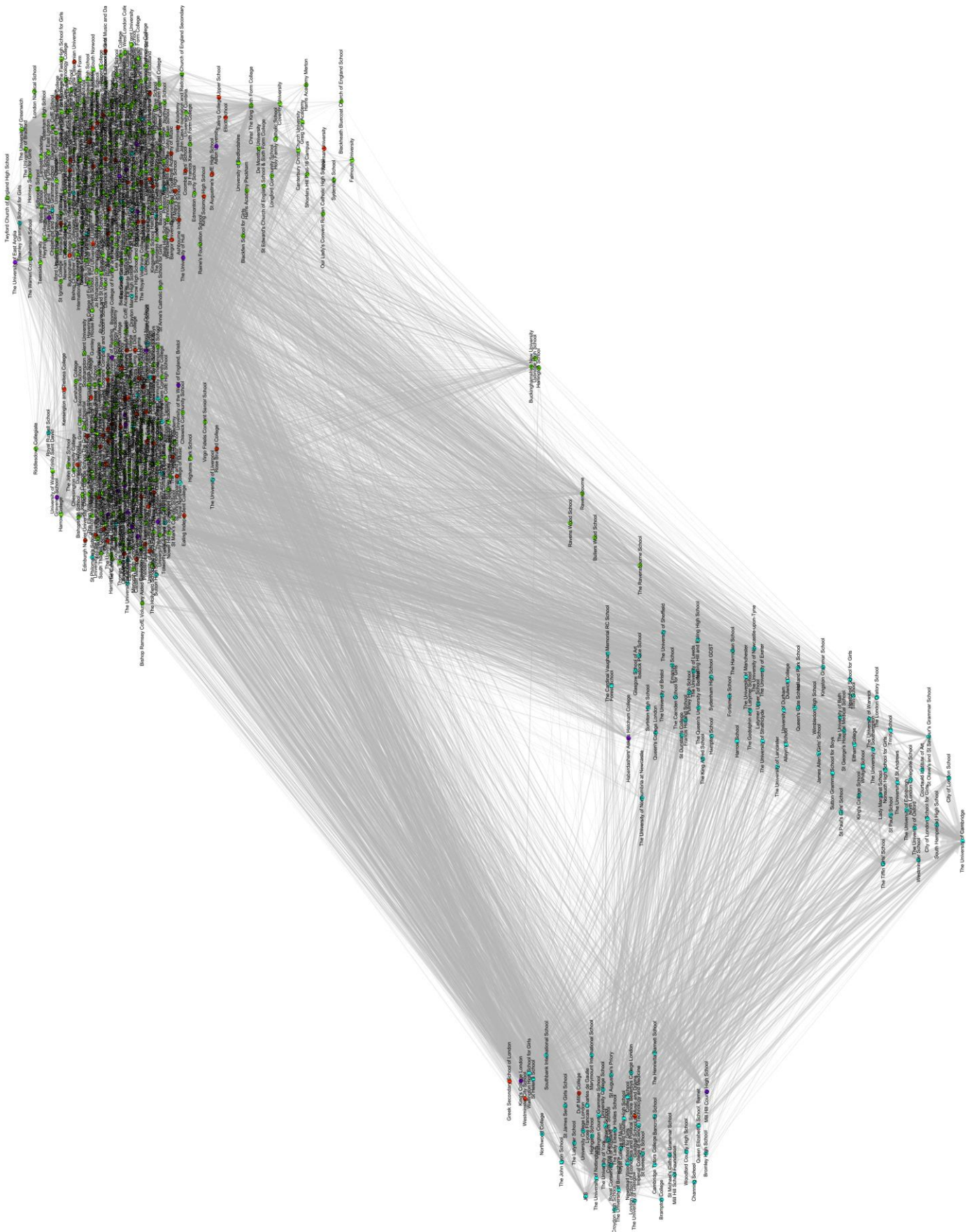


Figure 21 Modularity analysis of flows of London students between post-16 and university (2010-11 entry). OpenOrd algorithm. Edge cutting threshold: 0.96. OSLOM2

London's post-16 to HE circuits unsurprisingly reveal a more complex post-16 field than that found in Sheffield. The modularity analysis reveal two communities (coloured turquoise and green) with a third group of nodes which overlap (purple) between the two and a number of 'homeless' nodes (red) which statistically belong to neither group.⁵³ Modularity class one (turquoise. $p = 0.0694241$) and class two (green. $p = 0.00005$) clearly corroborate the two clusters suggested in the SVD analysis. An elite community of schools and universities, class one includes a significant number of state schools, not only grammar schools but a smaller number of 'comprehensive' schools with very strong ties to the Russell Group. Class two in contrast, is composed of the post-1992 universities alongside the FE colleges and smaller, newer school sixth forms. The over-lapping group includes many 'plateglass' universities as well as schools and colleges which, as discussed above in relation to Figure 19, play a dual role with students attending both elite and more 'democratic'⁵⁴ sub-fields of HE. The London graph, Figure 21, suggests both a binary divide in post-16 to HE circuits with most of class one in the bottom section of the space and most of class two in the top. However, using an edge-cutting threshold of 0.96, allowing the graph to reflect the influence of the larger movements of students suggests further sub-structures and positions within the field of post-16 transitions.

Taking the elite modularity class first, we can see that as well as being found more or less exclusively in the bottom half of the space, indicating the key binary split in post-16 to HE circuits, this sub-group is split into two further clusters. In the bottom-right is a cluster with Oxford and Cambridge situated furthest out, the schools situated closest to Oxbridge are primarily elite private boys' schools along with a few girls' grammars. The schools in question, Westminster, St. Paul's Girls and Boys, both City of London Schools and King's College School are also shown (figure 2) to be the nationally dominant feeder schools to Oxbridge. What this allows us to pick out however, is how Oxbridge has a slightly different pattern of recruitment in London to the main elite London universities of UCL, KCL, LSE and Imperial. All four London institutions are found in the opposing elite cluster, more distant from the historic elite London private schools and closer to slightly more of London's

⁵³ This latter grouping, often referred to as 'homeless', are primarily nodes with low degree (small numbers of connections to other schools or universities), which are generally either schools/colleges with very small numbers of students attending university or universities in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland with little recruitment from London.

⁵⁴ I am using 'democratic' in the French sense of 'democratised' access to university (Euriat and Thélot, 1995; Merle, 2010), by which is meant the opening up of HE to a broader, less 'traditional' student body.

grammar schools.⁵⁵ This division becomes apparent when comparing schools sending the largest numbers of students to these universities.

If we define this elite feeder school relationship somewhat arbitrarily by schools which send 10 students or more to a Russell Group university we can see the subtleties of this hierarchy.⁵⁶ Oxford and Cambridge are set apart in having the largest number of elite 'feeder' schools, with Oxford having 19 schools sending 10 or more students and Cambridge 13. The identity of these schools is important with them all being elite private or grammar schools with the exception of Cardinal Vaughan in West London. In London, UCL comes closest to this with 10, but LSE and Imperial have a completely different structure of recruitment within London: Imperial recruits over 10 students from only four London schools, all of them state grammars and LSE recruited over 10 students from just one school, Seven King's High School, a comprehensive in Ilford.⁵⁷ King's is the most institutionally diverse of the four London institutions, with only eight schools sending over 10 students of which only one school, Northwood College, is independent with four of the others being colleges/comprehensives. Its significant ties to a larger number⁵⁸ of less prestigious schools and colleges also contribute to locating it on the edge of elite sub-field and in an intermediate position, at least in a London context (if the rest of its national recruitment were included, it may not remain in this overlapping position). The only university which is closest to Oxbridge in their relationship to elite London *private* schools is Bristol, also situated in the right-hand cluster, with 15 schools sending over ten students of which just three are state grammars and the rest independent (See Table 3). Beyond that, the only other Russell Group universities with over ten feeder schools are Exeter, Manchester and Nottingham but the schools in question are less exclusively private sector, drawing rather on the 'super-state'

⁵⁵ The fact that all four schools sending ten or more students to Imperial are grammar schools does suggest that there could also be a particular subject choice bias here as well.

⁵⁶ A more empirically grounded account of what an elite private school might consider a suitable number of students attending Oxbridge, is suggested by the head of King Edwards School Birmingham described how when he arrived only 12 boys won Oxbridge places (Carman, 2013: 71-72). This was insufficient in his eyes and the number had increased to 18, a figure equalled or surpassed by only 33 schools in 2012-13 (See figure 30, appendix B)

⁵⁷ The school is classified as overlapping and is situated in the upper-right cluster, in fitting with its East London location.

⁵⁸ King's recruits from 237 different schools compared to just 126 schools for Cambridge. Moreover, Cambridge recruits from 14 elite private or state schools which send 10 or more students to Cambridge with four schools (two private and two grammar) sending over 20 students. In contrast, only 8 institutions send 10 or more students to King's and only one sends over 20 (St Dominic's Sixth Form College) and four of these eight are 'overlapping' sixth form colleges or schools, not the elite private and state schools which dominate the feeder school positions at Cambridge.

schools suggested by the SNA. There is then a hierarchy within a hierarchy; within the elite sub-field suggested by the modularity analysis there are a sub-set of 'super-elite' circuits focussed on Oxbridge and to a lesser extent Bristol. The schools in question are overwhelmingly the most established elite private schools with certain 'super-state' grammars/'comprehensives'. Broadly this is reflective of the elite modularity class as a whole but the dominance of the old elite private schools and the sheer number of students these schools send to these three elite universities marks out these circuits as dominant.

Cambridge	Oxford	Bristol
Westminster School	Westminster School	Harrow School
St Paul's School	St Paul's School	University College School
St Olave's and St Saviour's Grammar School*	St Paul's Girls' School	Westminster School
North London Collegiate School	King's College School	North London Collegiate School
St Paul's Girls' School	Tiffin School*	St Paul's School
Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet*	University College School	Hampton School
City of London School	Hampton School	Highgate School
Dulwich College	James Allen's Girls' School	King's College School
King's College School	North London Collegiate School	St Olave's and St Saviour's Grammar School*
Latymer Upper School	City of London School	Dulwich College
The Tiffin Girls' School*	The Latymer School	The Lady Eleanor Holles School
The Henrietta Barnett School*	City of London School for Girls	Putney High School
The Latymer School	Dulwich College	The Camden School for Girls**
Alley's School	Harrow School	The Godolphin and Latymer School
	Highgate School	The Latymer School
	Latymer Upper School	
	The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial RC School**	
	The Godolphin and Latymer School	
	The Lady Eleanor Holles School	

Table 3 Schools sending over ten students to Oxbridge and Bristol in 2011-12

* grammar school, ** 'comprehensive' school, all others independent.

What this makes abundantly clear is that there is a preceding supportive infrastructure to the 'golden triangle' referred to by Wakeling and Savage (2015a; 2015b). Within London schools at least though, the three major elite London universities have quite different recruitment patterns to Oxbridge and Bristol. This may be partly down to geography, London universities taking a larger number of local students, as is the case for most universities. However, some caution is needed with these findings given that the data is only for London students. It may be that if other schools were included, King's for example would sit more firmly within the elite cluster. Schools in the ROSE are not included and nor for that matter are the more sparsely distributed elite schools in other regions. Nevertheless, these graphs and tables suggest that London schools have entrenched their position within a nexus of elite social reproduction. There is persistence and small accumulative growth in this constellation of elite schools. Schools like St Paul's, Westminster, King's College, and City of London and to a lesser extent Dulwich, Harrow and University College have preserved their position relative to 1867.⁵⁹ However, many of the other private schools are new arrivals in this dominant grouping within the elite sub-field. The comprehensives and grammars within the elite group indicate how comprehensive reform failed in a double sense – too weak to ensure all boroughs carried reforms through, resulting in now hyper-selective, elite grammars in Outer London, and where it was carried through, certain former grammar schools and a handful of suburban secondary moderns were able to maintain or create models of middle-class social reproduction within the non-selective system. This small elite sub-field and its own internal divisions, are not the only forms of hierarchy suggested by Figure 21 and I wish to briefly to turn to these other institutional positions and circuits of education.

It is not only the position of King's College London which adds complexity to our analysis of elite universities. Beyond the Russell Group, both the University of Northumbria at Newcastle and Oxford Brookes University are also in the elite modularity class. This reveals how certain post-1992 universities now have significant ties to elite private and state schools. In fact, Oxford Brookes has the lowest proportion of state-school students of all post-1992 institutions (76.6% in 2013/14) so this is less surprising (HESA, 2015), but Northumbria's position suggests its recent rise up various rankings may be attracting a different students, perhaps those with lower grades in prestigious schools. Aside from King's and Queen Mary's being in the overlapping group, blurring our classifications of 'elite' Russell Group universities, this intermediate set of institutions (shown in purple) also

⁵⁹ See Appendix B.

includes a number of post-1992 institutions, as well as a number of 'plateglass' universities. The Universities of Surrey, Aston, Hull, Leicester, East Anglia, Reading and City have some smaller but still significant intakes from the elite community of schools as well as the more 'comprehensive' group of schools and FE Colleges in the second, larger, community and links to post-. For schools and colleges in this over-lapping group (e.g. Woodhouse College, Richmond upon Thames College, Graveney School), the SVD analysis also suggested they operated a dual-facing position between the two key poles of the elite grouping and the local post-1992 sector. Two of the overlapping schools (Mill Hill County and Aske's Hatcham) also sit in the bottom half of the graph along with King's College London but most of these institutions are situated in the top half of the space suggested using the OpenOrd algorithm. These overlapping institutions thus also have their own internal hierarchy, though they are generally closer to the more democratic circuits of modularity class two, as the algorithm spacing suggests.

Outside these elite and 'overlapping' modularity classes, the OpenOrd algorithm suggests that the varied set of circuits which incorporate most of the institutions in modularity class two, the homeless and overlapping groups are roughly split into two clusters. The universities with the largest edge-weights which seem to be structuring these two groups suggest an East-West divide between FE Colleges and post-1992 universities. In the left hand grouping are the large West London FE Colleges (Kingston and Richmond) and Roehampton, Brunel, the University of West London, the University of Surrey and St Mary's University College Twickenham. Opposite this grouping, the North, East and South-East FE colleges have the largest edge weights in the cluster, sending large numbers to Queen Mary's, UEL, University of Hertfordshire, Westminster, Kent, Greenwich, Essex and London South Bank. Other provincial post-1992 universities are split between these two groups in no particular pattern. This suggests a logical division of local, FE-post-1992 circuits for students who are most likely living at home, with distance and convenience of the commute perhaps playing a considerable role in opting for certain post-1992 institutions. It is the role of these FE to post-1992 circuits which indicate how the field of post-16 operates very differently in Sheffield, where the locally elite schools are also tied into these circuits in a way that they are not in London.

4.3.4 Circuits and Sheffield's field of post-16: polarised but less segregated HE destinations

In the SVD analysis, it was suggested that local circuits of post-16 to HE in Sheffield had a particularly strong role in shaping the structure of the network. Furthermore, this seemed to suggest that even the traditionally prestigious post-16 institutions of the suburban South-West played a dual role, firstly as conduits to nationally-recruiting institutions of the elite and middle classes and secondly as stepping-stones to local HEIs, particularly Sheffield Hallam but also the University of Sheffield and other regional universities. This suggests quite a different hierarchy to that seen in London and is also in-line with the maps suggesting that the main feeder schools to Oxbridge are situated in the South-East of England. We will now examine whether this distinction is also suggested by a modularity analysis and visualisation of the Sheffield post-16 to HE network. Before delving into the findings, it is worth noting the limitations of the OSLOM2 method for Sheffield. The very strong numbers of students attending Sheffield Hallam University had a 'distorting' effect on the network's structure. Running the OSLOM2 algorithm with the same settings as for the London case produced just one statistically significant cluster ($p = 0.050$) including Sheffield College, Longley Sixth Form College and Sheffield Hallam University with the other nodes considered 'homeless'. This may underline the limitations of modularity analysis as a method which remains very much in its infancy. To produce subtler communities using the OSLOM2 algorithm, an un-weighted version of the network was used. Clearly, this entails significant data loss and means the results must be analysed with caution, as this is not a like-for-like comparison. Nevertheless, the new results were statistically significant and, as will now be discussed, are broadly in line with the SVD analysis. The other effect of these very strong circuits between Sheffield Hallam almost all of Sheffield's schools, and especially the FE and sixth form college, is to strongly orient the OpenOrd visualisation (figure 23), making it less intuitive than the Fruchterman-Reingold approach (figure 22) which thus receives greater attention here.

Initially what the modularity analysis suggests is a very similar divide in the circuits of education operating at post-16 to HE to that seen in the London case. The first 'elite' community (again coloured turquoise, $p = 0.063$) includes Russell Group universities alongside Manchester Metropolitan University and Oxford Brookes. In terms of post-16 institutions, this group excludes all of those situated outside of the suburban South-West of the city. Only the suburban state schools (Tapton, King Edwards VII, Notre Dame, Silverdale, King Ecbert's and High Storrs School) and the city's two private schools, Sheffield High School and Birkdale School were included. Correspondingly, the second cluster (green, $p = 0.074$) includes post-1992 institutions, Sheffield College, Longley Park Sixth Form College and the only two other schools then operating sixth forms. The

overlapping group (purple) sitting at the centre of the Fruchterman-Rheingold lay-out of the graph (figure 22) includes the University of Sheffield, Leeds Metropolitan University and All Saints School. For All Saints in particular, this was also suggested by the SVD analysis. The University of Sheffield recruits in significant numbers from Sheffield College and Longley Park as well as from students in the suburban schools, giving it a similar role to King's in the London case. Whilst All Saints is a Catholic school recruiting over a large

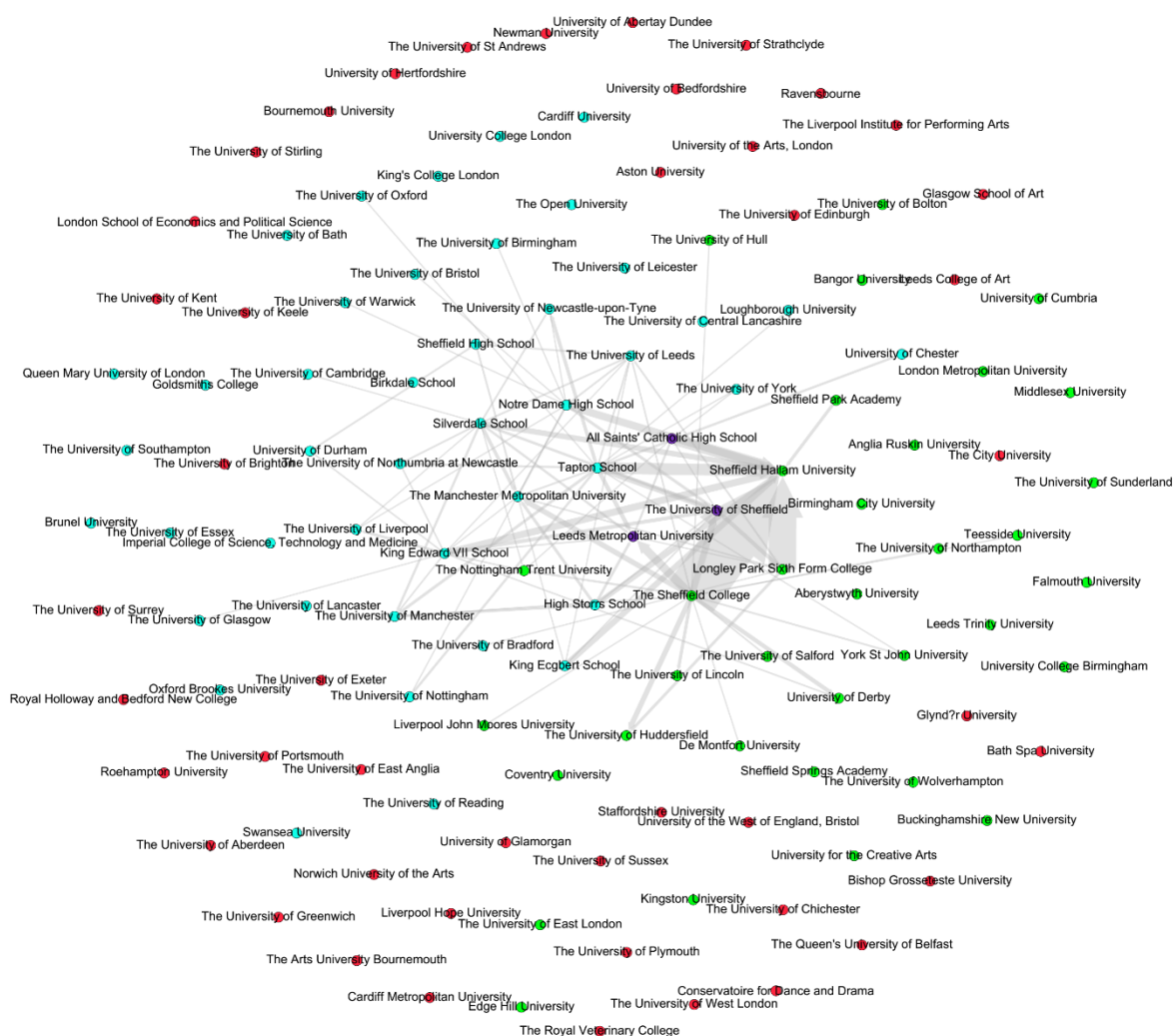


Figure 22 Modularity analysis of flows of Sheffield students between post-16 and university (2010-11 entry). Fruchterman-Rheingold algorithm. OSLOM2 modularity algorithm.



area and often from students actively wishing to avoid local alternatives, it is not firmly implanted in the middle-class suburban South-West as is the case with Notre Dame, the city's other Roman Catholic school. This could explain its intermediate, 'overlapping' position within Sheffield's field of post-16.

On first appearances then, there appears to be relatively little difference in the basic hierarchy of institutions which is produced by different circuits of education at post-16. The modularity analysis reinforces the common local perception within Sheffield of the binary urban-educational divide between Nick Clegg's affluent Hallam constituency and the rest. Whilst the hierarchy is different in terms of the schools involved and the small numbers make the analysis more difficult, the division between institutions embedded in 'national' circuits of normative middle-class trajectories and those primarily oriented towards the local-FE-post-1992 nexus seems to hold true. However, using the OpenOrd layout, a slightly different picture appears. Initially using the same edge-cutting threshold, little of interest seems to be shown. Only Sheffield Girls High and a fairly random grouping of slightly more distant Russell Group universities appears to form a separate grouping. Whilst Girls High failed to send any students to Oxbridge in 2012-13, they sent 52% of their cohort to the Russell Group, far higher than the suburban state schools (with 36%, Silverdale is closest with the other three on 24-27%). The OpenOrd graph may thus suggest that Girls High is far closer to elite schools elsewhere in the country than Sheffield's other schools, though still a long way from London's elite schools.⁶⁰ However, it also suggests its relatively weak ties to local universities, particularly Sheffield Hallam and the University of Sheffield. What figure 23 underlines is the extent to which all of the suburban state schools have very substantial numbers of students attending post-1992 institutions and Sheffield Hallam in particular. With the exception of the two private schools, Sheffield Hallam University receives the largest number of students from each school or college in the city, with the University of Sheffield usually coming in second. This means the edge-cutting algorithm fails to detect major differences, despite the clear sub-fields amongst the institutions suggested by the modularity analysis. What is underlined here is that despite the clear hierarchies within the field of post-16 in Sheffield, HE destinations of students are relatively less segregated than amongst the elite group of schools in London, particularly for state comprehensives with significant middle-class intakes.

⁶⁰ Girls High was ranked 103rd nationally for percentage Russell Group participation (DfE, 2015a); on this measure fifty schools in the top 100 were in London or the South-East.

Whilst this is partly a reflection of the small size of the private sector in the city, it also suggests the dual role of the sixth form schools in Sheffield's affluent South-West. These schools play a role both as conduits to normative spatial trajectories into university for particular fractions of the *local* suburban white middle class, but also as part of *local* circuits for ethnic-minority and white working-class students who opt to remain in Sheffield or nearby to study. However, this normative assumption about middle-class vs working-class mobility at the point of university choice (Holdsworth, 2009) will be problematized in chapter six, as the data suggest that there are in fact distinctions *within* the middle-class. There is a small but important difference here which suggests a less segregated and more 'comprehensive' post-16 system in Sheffield, especially when compared to London's 'super-state' schools. By no means, does this suggest a lack of hierarchy in Sheffield, but rather that the role of these schools is more subtly differentiated than it first appears. At a local level, these state schools are clearly at the apex of the institutional field, but their strong ties to the local post-1992 institution suggests an important difference to London's post-16 field. Comparing the comprehensives in modularity class one in Sheffield and London, in terms of destinations the key difference is the higher percentage of students attending post-1992 universities. At Camden School for Girls this figure is just over 15% whilst at High Storrs, Sheffield the figure is nearly a third, reaching nearly 50% in the case of Silverdale. Similarly the largest single destination for CSG is the University of Sussex, followed by the University of Leeds each with just over 20 students. By contrast, for High Storrs it is Sheffield Hallam (20) followed by Leeds Metropolitan (10) and for Silverdale, Sheffield Hallam (20) and the University of Sheffield (10). This implies very strong 'institutional coupling' between local universities, particularly Sheffield Hallam, and local schools and colleges which as Reay *et al.* argue (2005: 47) indicates how institutional status of schools/colleges and particular universities combine to shape educational choices.

In terms of post-16 to HE circuits understood simply as institution to institution patterns, the key metropolitan-provincial difference rests on the relative differences in ties to the local post-1992 sector. Whilst in London this dual-facing role is played by certain SFC's and certain FE Colleges with large A-level provision, in Sheffield the high-attaining school sixth forms are not as 'insulated' from this function as they are in London. What may be implied here but cannot be shown empirically using this method, is the presence of the wealth elite/established middle class dominating the sixth forms of certain strategically key 'super-state' 'comprehensives' in a way which is simply not replicated in Sheffield. This will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

If we understand the sixth form to be a key site in the creation and maintenance of elite and middle-class educational culture in the way suggested by Reid and Filby (1982), the position of the school sixth forms discussed above takes on a different meaning. It suggests that in the Sheffield case, the period that followed comprehensivization did not simply mean the protection of the sixth form as a site of middle-class culture. Despite the very strong educational inequalities within a Sheffield context, the different dynamics of local class structures mean that these institutions are not dominated by normative middle-class HE trajectories in the way that the sixth forms of London's 'super-state' comprehensive schools are. There is a relative and nested hierarchy of HE destinations by post-16 institution when compared across the two case study areas. The local sub-field of 'elite' post-16 schools in Sheffield does not match the sub-field of London schools where links to non-Russell Group institutions are more unusual. This suggests as Smith noted in his early study, that "class formation in each city was fundamentally conditioned by the way it "fitted into" [regional and national] structures.' It may be that as with the private school system, the relative size of the urban managerial-professional middle class is a key factors here, though the role of aspirant migrant-background families should not be underestimated either. To put it crudely and in terms of my own experience to be 'posh' in Sheffield does not have the same meaning as to be 'posh' in London, and the same is true of attending a sixth form 'comprehensive' school in a middle-class neighbourhood in Sheffield as opposed to London.

4.4 Conclusion – uncovering power structures and metropolitan-provincial differences in the post-16 to HE transition

Schools in urban school systems are situated simultaneously within local and national fields of education, and it is particularly at the post-16 to HE transition that this struggle for institutional position and status through university access is most apparent. Ultimately, this may be a conflict amongst students for places, but as De Nooy (2003) argued the movement of individuals through institutions suggests clear divisions in symbolic capital and institutional positions within a field, and this is clearly true for colleges and schools providing post-16 provision. Beyond combining a Bourdieusian conception of field with social network and GIS methods, this chapter has sought to situate these institutions geographically and historically within structural relations of power which different socio-spatial patterns of social reproduction, i.e. circuits, help form. The maintenance of the London-Oxford-Cambridge nexus of schools and universities is central to understanding the perpetuation of structural educational inequalities within the geography of social reproduction in England. The group of elite feeder schools concentrated in and around London which already existed in a proto-typical/nascent form in the 1860s, when university attendance was far less important, have not only entrenched their position but the group itself has grown.⁶¹ It has become a broader constellation of elite schools, dominating access to Oxbridge and to a lesser extent the Russell Group more broadly, and providing a preceding stage to the ‘golden triangle’ of London and Oxbridge universities.

Within this contemporary constellation, we now find an increased blurring of the boundaries between state and private. For the state schools concerned, this trajectory into the elite sub-field of schooling occurred over the past 60-80 years for certain grammar schools, many of which only really became established as large middle-class schools during the inter-war or immediate post-war period. In the case of the comprehensives concerned, this happened even more recently over the last 20-40 years, with suburbanisation and later gentrification playing key roles in skewing the political intentions of ‘the neighbourhood school’. This blurring of the boundaries between London’s ‘super-state’ and private schools, represents the deepening of the regional divide and the mutation of the dominant mode of social reproduction. This mutation has meant the growing importance of university study but also

⁶¹ Much of this growth happened in the last decades of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th, this was the key period of systematisation of the public school system when many schools *became* ‘public schools’ (Leinster-Mackay, 1981; Simon, 1987).

the creation of new *elite* schools within the state sector, which are now far closer in terms of university destinations to those in the private sector. As we have seen, this is simply absent in a small provincial city like Sheffield, though this may not be true of all provincial cities. The processes that have led to the current distinctive metropolitan hierarchy of elite institutions are deeply historical and must be understood through a relational analysis of institutional trajectories, which will form the focus of the next chapter.

What this suggests is a structural spatial history underpinning the contemporary geography and sociology of middle-class social reproduction; this is a historical layering at a regional level of an infrastructure and a class divide which has mutated and taken on new forms but has at the same time remained persistent. What I am suggesting then is the persistence of an elite educational infrastructure concentrated on London and a class dualism suggested by Rubinstein, *not* in an identical form but built on the maintenance of the economic division between London/ROSE and the rest of England, and particularly large swathes of northern England. The growing concentration of elites on London and the distinctive path taken by the professional/managerial upper-middle class within the capital have acted in tandem with the maintenance of Oxbridge's cultural and economic power. As Stefan Collini summarises:

Cambridge still functions as, among other things, a long coming-out party for some of the more exam-adept among the children of the professional and upper middle classes of, predominantly, South-East England (including London). And this is a reminder of how it has also maintained its intimate links with the governing elites

(Collini, 1999: 278-279)

What this chapter has shown is that the 'golden triangle' (Wakeling and Savage, 2015b) or the 'Oxford-London-Cambridge axis' (Shils, 1955) of universities are fed by a distinctive constellation of elite south-eastern schools in and around the capital. For Oxbridge in particular there is a distinctive south-eastern sub-set of feeder schools, suggesting that at least part of the 'metropolitan vortex' (Cunningham and Savage, 2015) sucking in elite graduates may well in fact be a circuit (See footnote p. 125), with students coming from London to Oxbridge and then returning to the capital.

The school hierarchies that are visible at post-16 in Sheffield as opposed to London underline this absence of any major elite presence in Sheffield. They also relativize the divisions within Sheffield's education system – the huge divides within Sheffield (Thomas et al., 2009) do not contain the chasm between London's elite private/super-state schools and the local, democratic post-1992 and FE circuits. Sheffield it must be said is not necessarily

representative of all provincial cities. The salient parallels to London are undoubtedly Birmingham and Greater Manchester, both of which have both a (slightly) more significant private sector, at least in terms of the institutions in question, if not the actual percentage of students attending Oxbridge, as well as significant state grammars. However, in a sense it is exactly this similarity, as well as their size, that also makes Manchester and Birmingham less representative of English cities as a whole. As I noted in the previous chapter, Sheffield's school system, in terms of school-types and their national position is far closer to Newcastle, Leeds, Bradford and Nottingham which have all seem similar declines in the percentage of students in private school since the crisis (See graphs in appendix D). There is thus a need for caution in discussing Sheffield as representative of all provincial cities, but the evidence on private schooling – intake, post-crisis decline and closure – all suggests that this geographical dualism of modes of social reproduction in the South-East including London as opposed to the rest of the country remains potent. The extension of this elite constellation to include certain 'super-state' schools marks out London from Sheffield and many other provincial cities and suggests distinctive circuits and patterns of social reproduction within the field of post-16 in London. What we are seeing in these schools is a new form of urban elitism in patterns of social reproduction through schooling as schools adapt to rapid urban change and create new patterns of ethnic/class formation. It is to these London super-state schools that I now turn.

5 'Super-state' circuits: transforming and re-making the 'Crown Heartland' elite and the blurring of the state-private school distinction

5.1 Introduction

Over the last decade, several reports have pointed to the rise of a sub-set of highly-performing state schools which are disproportionately affluent in their intake relative to other local state schools (Sutton Trust, 2006; 2013; Cribb et al., 2013). These schools are primarily the remaining grammar schools and certain comprehensive schools, with the latter mostly located in wealthier areas. In Ball *et al.*'s (1995) original study, they found that in London these schools formed part of a cosmopolitan middle-class circuit of education in which parents were able to negotiate the frictions of space in school choice either through supporting children in long commutes or through buying property in catchment areas. The latter strategy in particular, was examined more closely in the work on middle-class gentrifiers in the London school market in the 2000s (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Ball et al., 2004; McDowell et al., 2006; Butler and Hamnett, 2011). However, what the analysis of the previous chapter suggests is that in London these 'super-state' schools now share the same position within the field of post-16 education as the historic, elite private schools. In short, these schools now compete on similar terrain to their private peers, and on entry to HE the circuits are essentially equivalent. The circuits *into* these schools are diverse and vary substantially depending on locality as we will see, but this does not affect the similar profiles of HE destinations which are all largely biased towards the Russell Group. This chapter draws on my case studies of London schools to examine how these circuits are deliberately historically constructed and maintained by particular institutions over several decades.

Setting these case studies within a broader history of how schooling has developed in relation to particular urban and educational changes allows us to examine how students' individual trajectories fit into both collective circuits of education and larger structural dynamics of social reproduction. I examine three schools and two sets of circuits to observe how these 'super-state' schools are linked into particular circuits of education and how they culturally, and in terms of their clientele, literally overlap with the private sector. For the first case study, I analyse the deliberate reconstruction of King Henry's School (KHS) as a boys' grammar school over a thirty year period to the position from which it now competes with the

top private schools in London and the country in terms of Oxbridge entrance. This institutional 'rise' has coincided with a dramatic change in intake and the growth of a British-Indian/Sri Lankan-Tamil grammar school circuit in North and West London, underlining the 'porousness' of British elite education to new social formations. Within this case study I also briefly discuss Henrietta Barnett School (HBS), a girls' grammar school in north-west London which operates at a similar position both in terms of competing with the private sector for Oxbridge places and in terms of the British-Asian suburban circuits. Finally I explore the case of Camden School for Girls (CSG), which has a co-educational sixth form with a very large intake from the independent sector. The latter forms a particularly extreme case of the sixth form operating as a socio-economic filter, with *de facto* selection at 16 producing a very different demographic than that which arrives at 11. This forms the bridge into chapter six which examines more closely this 'stable enclavism' of middle-class dominance of certain comprehensives at the post-16 level.

5.2 King Henry's Grammar: establishing and asserting 'a public school spirit'

KHS's recent history reveals how for certain 'super-state' schools within the sub-field of London's elite schools at post-16, there is strong continuity in the influence and prestige of the 'public school' ethos established in the late 19th century (Honey, 1977). Moreover, it underlines how the neo-liberal reforms of the past 35 years have in this case enabled a deliberate return to many, though not all, of the 'traditional' tropes of schooling for the middle class and the elite in England (Halpin et al., 1997; Ball, 2012). KHS was founded in 1573 as a free grammar school for local boys with a Royal charter from Elizabeth I. By the late 19th century it had already begun to offer education to the middle class, albeit in general only up to the age of 14, placing it in the 'third grade' category of middle-class secondary schooling according to the Taunton Commission (Fearon, 1868: 274-277). With the suburban growth of the neighbourhood around the railway station which opened in 1871, the intake became increasingly middle-class which led to tensions with the local council over the aims of the school. This crystallized in the late 1870s and into the 1880s with conflict amongst the school governors over the level of fees and the division between the upper (post-14) and lower school, which also cut along class lines, with poor local boys excluded from the upper section. In an independent ruling on the issue, the Charity Commissioners eventually sided with the head teacher, who had argued for this division to be maintained, and overruled the opposition of local poor law guardians and local Barnet councillors who wished to end the

division (Tripp, 1935: 129-134). This conflict over whether or not the school was serving the local community has strong parallels to the situation in the 1990s we will see later.

During this period of expansion of the school with local suburban development, King Henry's was attempting to assert what an early headmaster called a 'public school spirit' within the school from the late 1880s and into the 1930s (Tripp, 1935: 174). This coincides with the establishment of what Honey called the 'community' of public schools (1977: 284-287), or what would in Bourdieusian terms be the field of elite and middle-class schools. As a state-funded and council-controlled grammar school, King Henry's could not achieve the autonomy of most public schools, but the head between 1931 and 1961 was quite clear that his aim for the school during this period was to aim to 'do as well in producing good scholars, good athletes, *and* reliable gentlemen as schools of greater renown and greater advantages' (Original emphasis. Jenkins, 1972: 53). Note here the importance of the ideal of the 'gentleman' in a school which had a suburban white-collar intake, but was by no means a school for the elite, aristocratic, financial or otherwise. Between the older grouping of entirely fee-paying public schools and the newer grammar schools was an intermediate group, what Leinster-Mackay (1981) called the 'quasi-public school'. These institutions were in a 'process of "becoming" rather than that of "being"' (Leinster-Mackay, 1981: 63-64). King Henry's arguably operated in this in-between category, a position which the Head felt was threatened by the 1944 Education Act and the opening up of secondary education for all:

They [the public schools] were the level, the standard that we [grammar school] Heads aimed to reach with our schools, and, by the time of the Second War, a number of us had pretty well done so. With a steadily increasing share in the Open Scholarships at Oxford and Cambridge, with a Blue here and there – and these were the criteria that counted in those days – with fixtures between the two kinds of school becoming more frequent, with camps and expeditions in common, we had heavily blurred the line of class (horrible word) demarcation, had quietly broken down old barriers, and this without doing harm to anybody, even if one or two of the less well-placed independent schools were beginning to feel a serious draught because of our success. Now with a fresh line of demarcation drawn, all our good and hard work was largely undone; more, it was well and truly poured down the pan, and the plug scornfully pulled on it.

(Jenkins, 1972: 143)

Blurring the boundaries between the fully fee-paying public schools and the primarily state-funded grammars, which was also to some extent a class boundary, as the head reluctantly

admitted, was a major effort. This entailed the building up of the sixth form, retaining as much autonomy as possible from local authority control, improvements in sporting achievement (specifically rugby, cricket and athletics) and increasing successful applications to university, especially Oxbridge. His discussion of playing fixtures against public schools as an indication of belonging to their number, supports Honey's (1977) definition of the public school community on the basis of shared sporting fixtures. This definition of community, continues today as will become clear below. It is worth noting how the head perceives his peer institutions in a very similar frame to how Bourdieu conceptualizes field, with certain activities carrying particular cultural and symbolic value for the school (Bourdieu, 1996: 198-200). The expansion of the sixth form was central in positioning within this field, and the organization of the sixth form was helped by the school's move into a large Gothic Revival building surrounded by playing fields in 1931.

Re-locating to new buildings and a larger site was a key component of asserting an identity within the field of elite and middle-class schools. A similar re-location followed by sixth form expansion during the inter-war period also took place at Haberdasher's Aske Boys School (Wigley, 2007; Gamsu, 2015b) but unlike for Haberdasher's, King Henry's was only able to afford re-building through accepting money and greater control from Hertfordshire County Council. This local council control would eventually lead to the abolition of grammar school selection within the school in 1971, as the county council moved to becoming a fully comprehensive authority.⁶² What is central in understanding this history is that very little has changed in the 'criteria that count[...]', as will become clear, the school judges itself very much on the same criteria laid out in the 1930s and has deliberately positioned itself as belonging to the public school community of the 21st century.

5.3 After the comprehensive period: re-invention of tradition and the return of 'gentlemanly' values

The school now makes clear and highly selective use of this history, claiming on its school website to be an institution 'steeped in history and tradition'. In Hobsbawm's (1983: 9-10) sense, these 'traditions' are now being used to legitimize the school's position amongst a community of largely older, private schools which it now increasingly considers its peers.

⁶² This was in fact, never quite achieved, with HBS' Grammar remaining selective throughout this period.

Institutional 'mimicry' of ritualistic practices has long been key to asserting prestige for newer, less established educational institutions (Veblen, 2007: 239-241). These traditions are, in keeping with Hobsbawm's critique, entirely contingent and manufactured. Had the decision not been made to opt for rugby union, rather than football (soccer) as the old boys' association then wished, the school would not have the current 'tradition' of playing only cricket and rugby union as a school. Sport has long been a powerful signifier of public school status and elite education (Honey, 1977; Mangan, 2000) as I will return to below. That the deliberately created 'tradition' of reading the School Chronicle on Founder's Day dates from 1931, reveals how the school's 'history' became part of asserting an institutional identity closer to those older, more established schools within the field of 'public' schools. In contrast to the School Chronicle's detailed description of its royal 16th and 17th century roots, the school's period as a comprehensive is euphemistically described on the school's website as 'the difficult period of reorganisation'. It is at the end of this period as a comprehensive that the school's current identity began to be formed. The traditions that were being developed and maintained in the mid-twentieth century were in part a response to the institutionalization of similar practices in the late 19th century period of public school 'systematisation' (Simon, 1974b; Simon, 1987). Institutions such as King Henry's, wishing to attain a comparative position within the field were forced to respond in kind. These practices were however, contested and struggled over as Bourdieu (1996: 265) notes, and just as the earlier head argued, the current school is also attempting to compete as closely as possible with elite private schools, particularly in academic matters.

In an interview with the current assistant-head, it was made clear that a deliberate reconstruction of the grammar school ethos began with the arrival of the new head in 1984. According to the assistant head, when he joined the school in 1986, as a comprehensive, the school had seen a fall in its popularity with poorly-attended open days and lower academic results. The new head set out to restore an ethos of 'manners and learning', referring to the original Elizabethan charter of the school to describe an emphasis on strict discipline and a strong pastoral ethos; a selective reading of the school's history was thus central to this project. By the late 1980s this approach had achieved some success with parents returning in greater numbers to open days. This coincided with the introduction of Grant-Maintained status in the 1988 Education Act allowing opt-out from local authority control. The school was one of the first to adopt the status, using it to re-introduce selection, first by interview, where parents were 'rated' according to whether they were 'in tune with the values of the school'. In 1994 this was followed by the return of a fully-fledged 11-plus-style entry exam. Grant-maintained status was, as has been noted elsewhere, not being used to

form a new educational culture, but rather as a means of 'opting into the past' and reverting to 'traditional' grammar school traits (Halpin et al., 1997). Neo-liberal school reform permitted the gradual re-creation and the renewal of forms of selection and a broader elite institutional identity. It was in a very real sense, a 'regressive modernisation', a new form of school status designed to weaken the local state which simultaneously enabled a restoration of an elitist educational culture that had been threatened by the comprehensive movement.

Already in the early 1990s the school was beginning to move away from the local state sector and was creating an image and a reputation as an elite school. It gained national media attention for its academic results and despite the comprehensive hiatus, as early as 1991 the school was described as 'more like a public school' with 'omnipresent rugby' (Copsey, 1991). In the face of local resistance to selection (Baker, 1999), paralleling earlier concerns in the late 1880s about whether the school was in fact serving the local community, the school's academic reputation steadily grew with the number taking the entrance exam for 180 places growing from 6-700 in 1994 to 2000 in 2014. Geographically, the de-facto catchment area expanded dramatically but this occurred 'only at the point where those that can afford independent schools consider[ed] the school' (Interview with Assistant Head). This pre-occupation with the school's position in relation to the private sector and attracting the same clientele, is deeply indicative of the particular goal of returning to its former 'public school spirit[ed]' grammar school days.

The school once again finds itself at the blurred line between the selective state sector and the private schools. However, the direction of the school is very much to assert an identity amongst the top-end of London's private sector. As a former head boy (Simon, Focus Group 2) stated, the head is 'really striving' to make links with several prestigious schools, both private and a girls grammar (HBS), through debating (another extra-curricular activity with strong private school connotations) and careers events. There are no similar attempts to build links with its original sister school, King Henry's Girls, which remains a comprehensive and is located only a kilometre away. Sport is again central to positioning the school in relation to its peers, with the 'sporting circuit' of teams against which the school plays rugby being indicative of this broader project:

Sol: How come you don't play other state schools?

Jake: I think like our school has a particular reputation that they try and keep up and they try and like mix it with the private schools. I think they want to see themselves as a private school.

(Focus Group 1, King Henry's Boys Grammar School)

Once again sport is a key reference point here and, with reference to rugby union in this case (though cricket, water polo and Eton Fives were also mentioned), the school tends to primarily play private schools and a few current or former state grammars. Sport remains a defining signifier of asserting status and of belonging to a broader community of elite schools and sharing their cultural baggage. As the head implies in the Good Schools' Guide (2014), rugby remains wedded to the 19th century project of creating gentlemen:

'Rugby serves boys so well. [...] It has a gentlemanly ethos, of which I enormously approve.'

This emphasis of the role of sport as part of a broader socializing project to create 'gentlemen' strongly repeats the aims of the mid-twentieth century head. Rugby union itself is the result of an explicit southern and 'gentlemanly' class struggle against working-class northern rugby players (Collins, 2013: 90-115). Moreover, it also recalls the broader role of 'public schools' in allowing the middle classes to attain the status of 'gentlemen' without the need for title or land but instead through absorbing a particular set of cultural values relating to sport and academia (Honey, 1977: 225-229; Reid and Filby, 1982: 26-27). What is clear here is just how static these conventional criteria of membership within the field of elite and middle-class schools are; restoring the school to its former grammar school status has involved replicating the elite male sporting culture established within the public school system in the late 19th/early 20th century. This 'gentlemanly ethos' represents a 'reworking' of traditional elite educational culture to suit contemporary contexts and also as a form of symbolic distinction for the school. Claiming the cultural connotations of the 19th century public school is now an institutional strategy for publicity and re-asserting an elite identity and position within the field.

The re-construction of the school based on historic 'public school' values is not limited to sports however. The school's adoption of rigorous setting from year 7 culminates in a system of internal exams and 'recommendations' from teachers in order to pass into the sixth form at 16. As a very high proportion of students attain the top grades; 92.77% of GCSEs were at A*-A in 2015 which placed them effectively in the top 15 independent schools nationally. KHS also operates an internal system of exams *in addition* to GCSEs. These results are then looked at alongside GCSEs with individual subject teachers having final discretion over whether students are given a 'recommendation' to study the A-levels they want. Whilst the assistant head discussed this in terms of ability and course preferences, students talked instead of not getting the recommendations for the courses they *actually wanted*, with maths

and sciences being the most demanding. In online forums used by students' parents, this is more emotively described as a 'cull', with around 15-30 students leaving or being forced out. Online forums provide several cases where students were apparently forced out, the parent quoted below was an example of a 'voluntary' departure, her son leaving, primarily due to being refused for maths and sciences.

My son [...] achieved A* in main subjects and the rest As and decided to move to another grammar, where he is very happy and doing 3 Sciences and Maths (Maths was not on offer in King Henry's, as he did not start applying himself in time-the competition for Science places and Maths is very high). His departure was entirely voluntary. [...] To fit well into school environment you need to be very bright and hardworking or if not so bright very, very hardworking, as the expectations are high. And also very obedient. There is no place for any teenage rebellion. [...] You are either very high achiever or you are nothing. Work hard, play hard is their policy, which I do not subscribe to. There is no time for playing anyway.

Passing into the sixth form is a serious barrier to cross, particularly if students have not fallen into line with the strict discipline. In contrast, those that adhere to the school's approach to academic work and broader culture are 'rewarded' on entry to the sixth form with prefect responsibilities:

Simon: I think as we've progressed through the school they've got less strict with a lot of things, like what you said about high-pressure environments, if you do well in your exams and get into good uni's you pretty much like run the school [laughter] but if you don't they just like crack down on you really hard. So it's like if you do well with your exams it lets you kind of be more liberal and get round things. [laughter]

Sol: Run the school? Is that like in terms of... Sorry [laughter- other boys]

Anish: That's prefect stuff

Arav: He's like head boy. Or was, last year

Sol: Are there a lot of prefects?

Simon: Oh yeah so we had, well our year had 98 prefects. [...] But there's different positions, so we have one school captain, one deputy school captain, 10 lieutenants, house captains- 30 house captains and then prefects. It's like a system. It works so they just kept it going, but they've expanded a lot in recent years. It's come up from about 60-70 to like 90-100 now.

(Focus Group 2, King Henry's School)

In a year-group of around 140 students, the vast majority will have some level of prefect responsibility, with authority over open days, Founder's Day, sporting competitions and lunchtimes. Passing into the sixth is thus both an additional academic selection and a cultural one. It indicates institutional approval for the student, but it is also a test of whether a

student has sufficient obedience to meet the institutional and academic requirements which ensure the school's continued reputation. Accessing this 'school within a school' is an additional rite of passage for students with the school's judgement of academic ability, attitude and values very much in line with the judgements made at Rugby School and other major public schools in the late 19th century (Reid and Filby, 1982: 36-38). This prefect system is an extension and adaptation of the original KHS system which was much smaller with only around 8-12 during the 1930s and the post-war period, in line with the smaller school population. Nevertheless the cull and the prefect system combine to form a highly disciplined system, as another forum poster aptly summarised:

I'm afraid that the lesson with King Henry's is: only go in with your eyes very much open. What they choose to do well, they do very well and with clinical, brutal effectiveness. They are a well-oiled machine, be it at Swimming, Music, Rugby, A2 League tables or Oxbridge Entrance. Their Year 11 cull is equally clinical and equally brutal.

This disciplining is being driven by a clear aim of pushing the school firmly into the orbit of the private sector in terms of results, something which sport and other institutional strategies not mentioned here in depth, also aim to achieve. These other strategies include a new swimming pool, library and dining area funded partly through quasi-obligatory 'donations' of £60 per month which echo developments in other 'super-state' schools.⁶³ Capital expenditure on buildings and equipment has nearly tripled in the private sector since 1990, rising from £546 per pupil in 1990 to £1516 in 2014 (Killik, 2014: 7). In light of this and the rapid rises in fees in the private sector, the donations King Henry's request are small, though to this must be added the obligatory raffle:

Sol: Other people mentioned there's like a donation every month or something?

Hiren: £60 a month

Abejide: Oh yeah the King Henry's Covenant thing

Hiren: I mean it's not, it's one of those things that's like not compulsory but it's like recommended but it's compulsory yeah. [...]

Sol: It's quite a lot of money I guess, £60 a month.

Himanshu: Then there's like the winter raffle and the summer fete raffle as well.

[laughter] And as you go from like year 7, you're meant to, they kind of pressure you

⁶³ Substantial donations are also present at other high-performing state schools. Grey Coat's Hospital School, chosen by the Camerons for their daughter providing another example (McTague, 2015) with a donation of £120 asked for on acceptance of a sixth form place. This is really the tip of the iceberg with other 'super-state' schools earning more substantial sums. Tiffin Girls' operates a similar 'voluntary parental contribution' of £360 for the year, with parental donations worth £146,000 in the case of Tiffin Girls' (2015) in the 2014-15 tax year. Topping the list of parental donations is the Blairs' state school of choice London Oratory (2015: 5) who earned £378,842 in 2015. Other competitors such as Latymer in Edmonton (2015) or Wilson's Grammar in Croydon (2015) earn similar amounts from donations as well as hundreds of thousands of pounds from property or stocks.

into selling everything and then as you go up they reduce it by £5 each year so it starts off at 25 I think. It goes to 15 when you're in year 9 or something like that.

Abejide: I think it's just one book in the end.

Sol: One book?

Girish: Five tickets. You have to sell 25 tickets in year 7 and then 20, 15, 10, 5 [...]

James: Selling them was also voluntary, like our contributions, voluntary.

Hiren: "Voluntary"

Himanshu: Do you have quote marks in an audio recording?

(Focus Group 4, KHS)

From the tone of the conversation this was clearly a commitment which the students found irritating but the implications of this are serious, with regular donations clearly going beyond school fundraising. This issue of *de facto* fee-paying at the top-end of the state sector indicates a further blurring of the lines between the 'super-states' and the independents. For King Henry's, these strategies function to push the school into the elite sub-field of London schools. Moreover, students reported a strong focus on only a small sub-set of Russell Group universities (Warwick, UCL, LSE, Nottingham and Durham) and Oxbridge, with this seen very much as a naturalised process by students:

Chitesh: The main ones the school tends to focus on for science are UCL, King's and Imperial. I think for history and things like that, Warwick and maybe Durham...

Sanjeev: There's like kind of ten uni's that they look at. Oxbridge, UCL, LSE, Bristol, Warwick, Durham and that's kind of it...

(Focus Group 3, KHS)

Hiren: We've always kind of been put in that direction so we've had like Oxbridge talks and stuff, so it's just been a way of life really.

Girish: I think you're just expected to go to one of the top places.

Hiren: You don't think twice about it, it's just...

Girish: Yeah you're just like expected to go to one of the top uni's

Hiren: That's the way it is.

(Focus Group 4, KHS)

Simon: [...] naturally we have around 70 or 80 apply to Oxbridge and this year we got 37 offers.

(Focus Group 2, KHS)

Given that nationally only 1% of state-maintained school students gain places at Oxbridge, this number of offers, even if the acceptance rate is substantially lower, is not 'natural' at all but completely exceptional (the school's acceptance rate for Oxbridge entry in the 2011-12 year was around 15%). Taking the broader grouping of entry to the Russell Group universities in 2011-12, the school placed in the top five of all schools (state and independent) with over 75% of the cohort attending one of these institutions (DfE, 2014). More important here is the concentration on a particular sub-set of institutions *within* the Russell Group. This suggests an elite suburban grammar circuit within the state sector, with the school effectively a feeder school for Wakeling and Savage's (2015a; 2015b) 'golden triangle' of universities in which the elite is concentrated, (Oxbridge and London) and their close competitors (Durham, Bristol, Exeter). These results reinforce the clear institutional equivalence in terms of grades and university acceptances between the elite grammars and the private sector. For elite and middle-class social reproduction there is no difference in the likely outcome, although Oxbridge acceptances still remain higher in a larger number of private schools. This was commented on in focus groups, as despite individual interviews with Oxbridge graduates, students still felt they were at a relative disadvantage to their private school competitors.

Re-constructing the grammar school tradition has thus gone above and beyond the institutional position achieved by the mid-century headmaster cited above, though clearly the conditions of institutional competition and demand to access the school are dramatically different. Despite these changes, there is a deep ossification of cultural tropes and goals which have symbolic value for schools aspiring to elite positions within the field; in Meyer and Rowan's (1977: 348-349) terms the organizational forms of powerful institutions have gained a mythic status, becoming 'institutionalized rules' helping to legitimate and perpetuate the position of historic institutions and prescribing the conditions of competition for newcomers. These cultural forms retain their symbolic power in determining institutional position within the sub-field of London's elite schools whilst also functioning internally, structuring a particular school organization which supports this position. Neo-liberal school reform in one of its proto-type forms as the grant-maintained school (Halpin et al., 1997) or in the contemporary form of academization, has not shifted the symbolic weight and value of particular sports. Nor for that matter has it challenged the academic capital a school gains in achieving Oxbridge acceptances and the extensive preparation and rigid forms of setting and homework which King Henry's uses to achieve these acceptances. Rather what we see is a re-framing of institutional forms of governance but the maintenance of much of the

structural dynamics of prestige and symbolic value which have under-pinned social reproduction through the English/British school system since the late 19th century.

Similarly the tensions with the local community and the local authority over the autonomy of the school and whether it actually serves local residents has re-appeared several times since the late 19th century. This reflects how the school's position within a field of elite schools, which compete with each other over relatively large distances across London and the ROSE, is not without forms of local contestation and, from an institutional perspective, potential threats to their position. The school's attempt to re-shape itself after the 'difficult period of [comprehensive] reorganisation' has successfully re-established King Henry's as a key educational conduit to ensure middle or upper-middle class social reproduction or upward mobility. However, what has changed is the demographic groups taking advantage of this. The dramatic shifts in the circuits of education which run through the institutional field of London's elite and middle-class schools reflect the depth of population change in North-West London.

5.4 Shifting circuits: ethnic minority grammar circuits and resilient logics of social reproduction...

The focus groups with the boys at King Henry's took place in a small office on a long corridor which was filled with annual photos of the prefects stretching back to the 1930s. The further you went down the corridor, the more the ethnicity of prefects changed. The first student of colour appeared in the prefects' photo in 1987 gradually increasing in number until the mid-2000s when they became a substantial majority of a much enlarged prefect body. In line with broader changes in suburbs across British cities and particularly in London (Phillips, 1998; Hamnett and Butler, 2010; Muñoz, 2010; Butler and Hamnett, 2011), the suburbanisation of parts of North-West London by the Indian and Sri-Lankan Tamil heritage communities has expanded dramatically in the last twenty years (Brent Council, 2013). Since the mid-eighties, this grouping in particular, alongside other people of colour has seen a gradual increase in the school's intake. Alongside the regressive transformation of the school from an institutional perspective, there has also been a substantial demographic shift in the school's intake. In this section the dynamics of this comparatively recent circuit of education will be examined and set in the context of broader historical patterns of social reproduction within the English/British school system.

5.5 Entry to King Henry's and the British-Asian middle classes in the grammar system

The circuit of education currently running through KHS indicates how certain ethnic-minority groups in North and North-West London, particularly with parents or grandparents from the Indian sub-continent and especially India, are using the grammar system to opt-out of local, catchment-based state provision. As a circuit this is not, as I will discuss later, exceptional to London, with parallel processes and circuits in Birmingham's grammar schools (Abbas, 2007) and Leicester (Goff, 2008). In focus groups, over half the sample, 14 out of 21 boys, reported having sat other 11+ exams, going as far as Buckinghamshire and Slough grammars as well as Hertfordshire's semi-selective schools and a number of private schools. In some cases sitting these other tests were merely *de facto* practice tests ahead of the King Henry's exam. A small number of students, 3 in the sample and just under 10% of the actual entrants to the school in 2003-04 came from the private sector (note this is not the same cohort as the interviewees). Within the sample several mentioned applying to other private

schools in North London and Hertfordshire, but only those who were at private prep school would likely have been able to afford this. For most of the students, failing to pass the 11+ would have meant attending the local state school. Of those who would have gone private, they were both of Indian origin and firmly upper middle-class in their parental occupations (investment banker/school admin and a director and financial advisor). This underlines a key dynamic of British-Indian middle-class social reproduction through the school.

Parental social class (NS-SEC)	Ethnicity									Column Total	Column Total (%)
	Black African/ Caribb'n.	Chinese	Indian	Other Asian	Other Mixed	Other White	Pakistani	Refused	White- British		
1. Higher managerial & professional	x	x	10	x	5	x	x	0	15	40	29.60%
2. Lower managerial & professional	x	0	x	x	x	x	0	0	x	20	14.10%
3. Intermediate	0	x	10	x	0	0	x	x	5	30	20.00%
4. Small employers & Own account workers	0	x	x	0	x	0	0	0	x	5	5.20%
5. Lower supervisory and technical	0	x	x	0	0	0	0	0	x	x	x
6. Semi-routine	x	x	x	x	x	0	x	0	x	10	8.90%
7. Routine	x	0	x	x	0	0	0	0	x	x	x
Not recorded or refused	x	x	5	x	0	x	x	0	10	25	17.00%
Row Total	5	5	40	10	10	x	5	x	35	135	100%
Row total (%)	5.20%	5.20%	29.60%	8.90%	7.40%	x	4.40%	x	26.70%	100%	

Table 4 King Henry's School sixth form: Cohort of students born 1991/92, parental social class and ethnicity. Data: (DfE and HESA, 2014). Note: 'x' in tables 3-5 indicates a figure less than 6 or a percentage based on a figure less than 6. All numbers rounded to a multiple of 5 so totals/percentages will not always sum accurately. See standard disclosure controls (DfE, 2015b: 36).

Looking at the NPD data for King Henry's (Table 3), of the cohort that entered the school in 2003-04, just under 75% of students were ethnic-minority students and nearly 45% of the cohort (n=135) were in NS-SEC 1-2, rising to over 60% in NS-SEC 1-3.⁶⁴ Of those students in NS-SEC 1-2, white-British students formed the largest group, accounting for nearly 30% of students in NS-SEC 1 or 2. However, the Indian-background students accounted for 25% of students in these categories, clearly the largest ethnic-minority middle-class group. British-Indian students are the largest middle-class ethnic-minority group across Outer London's grammar schools. This highly-specific ethnic dimension to King Henry's social class intake, is indicative of the development of a suburban British-Indian middle-class circuits through London's grammar schools. Some of these students, including three interviewed at King Henry's, used private preparatory schools presumably to attempt to ensure access to

⁶⁴ I have not produced cross-tabulations showing the breakdown of class and ethnicity in greater detail because of the standard disclosure controls which limit the usefulness of the tables as can be seen above.

London's grammar schools. The use of preparatory schools to ensure access to selective grammars is not a new finding, however, the data does suggest that in London, British-Indian families are particularly successful in using this strategy to access selective secondary education, with the results of a chi squared analysis suggesting that this is true across London and not just at King Henry's grammar.⁶⁵ Of the 548 students in London taking this prep to state school route in 2003-04 only 246 students went on to a state grammar. The only two ethnic groups where the majority of students in these groups went to a grammar not a comprehensive were British-Indian (61%, n=100) and British-Chinese (75%, n= 15). White British students in contrast mostly went from the prep system into state comprehensives (55%, n=230).⁶⁶ More generally this movement from prep to super-state school highlights the broader fluidity between the top-end of the state sector and the private schools. These data emphasise how the subtleties of 'race' and class are interwoven in the circuits of education moving through the elite sub-field of the 'super-state' and private schools.

It must be noted that this British-Indian grammar circuit is very much concentrated on the grammars of the North and East London, and to a lesser extent the grammars of Slough and South-West London. In general of the 19 grammar schools in London only four are majority non-white, three are just over 50% white and the rest have a clear white-British majority. There is thus still a clearly racialized dimension to the suburban grammar circuits within London, which has begun to be challenged through schools like King Henry's over the last 25-30 years. Despite this, the prep-school to grammar pathway supports the broad argument made here regarding how particular strata within the British-Indian suburban middle-class are forming a new pattern of social reproduction with particular historical resonances, as I will seek to clarify below.

5.6 The British Asian grammar circuit in North London: suburbanisation and historical parallels

⁶⁵ Statistics for All Table Factors: Pearson's Chi-squared test. $\chi^2 = 56.6348$ d.f. = 13 $p = 2.082702e-07$. N = 548. The table is not reproduced here in full because of the requirement by the DfE to suppress small numbers.

⁶⁶ In terms of the state secondary schools which receive students from private prep schools, those taking 10 or more students are largely grammars with the exception of London Oratory, a faith comprehensive in the elite modularity class one group above.

As noted above, the use of the grammar school system by the Indian middle-class and other minority groups is geographically concentrated in certain areas of London. For King Henry's grammar, it is two boroughs of North-West London where the Indian middle-class intake is largely drawn from (Harrow Council, 2013; Brent Council, 2013). Both these boroughs saw substantial increases in the British Asian residents between the 2001 and 2011 census. This shift in the suburban population was borne out in a stand-alone interview with a student from Henrietta Barnett girls' grammar school. HBS has a similar intake to King Henry's, with a large Indian and also Sri Lankan-Tamil intake from the same boroughs and similar commuting patterns. It is also one of King Henry's partner schools for extra-curricular activities and sits within the elite field of schools seen in the previous chapter. In the interview, she described how her local neighbourhood had become increasingly inhabited by Sri Lankan Tamil families:

Chelvy: I went back to my primary schools two years ago for work experience, I was helping out year one and they were *all* Sri Lankan. With a bit of other races as well, basically Sri Lankan Tamils. I was so overwhelmed, cos when I went there, [...] I was the only one and probably one other girl and she was my neighbour, that was it. And when I went back it was literally like I'd gone back to my Saturday school, it was literally [laughs], I went back and I told my mum, 'So much has changed! I didn't realise that so many people had moved towards the area.' And my mum was telling me, 'Oh, yeah. Loads of people have the thing where they think Harrow's a really good area to bring up your kids', so those ones that do move from Germany or come from Sri Lanka are drawn to Harrow cos they think it's a really good area and when you move to an area which has lots of people from the same background you feel more comfortable. So, I think that's why everyone's congregated in that particular area. I didn't realise until my mum told me, but on my street alone the proportion of Tamils has actually increased, cos when we moved we were like the only ones, that was it. Now, I just realised that [laughs] every other door there is a Tamil person there.

S: Where have the other people moved to?

Chelvy: Most of the people on my street were in their 60s, so I guess they've passed away really.

Butler and Hamnett's (2011: 113-118) work on East London describes how minority-ethnic patterns of suburbanisation were strongly related to discourses of upward mobility and a desire for larger semi-detached properties away from inner-East London. Whilst comparable interviews about housing choice were not possible here, Chelvy's description suggests it is likely that ethnic-minority families are making similar housing decisions in Brent and Harrow. Simon (Focus group 2, King Henry's) also described how his parents had lived in a flat in East London before having children, moving to North-West London when they 'had enough money'. This process of outward suburbanization was strongly linked to the upward social mobility of a comparatively recently arrived minority group has some historical parallels

within the Jewish community (Waterman, 1992: 109; Newman, 1985: 368-369). The work of Krausz (1969: 86-90) in particular analyses in great depth how upward social mobility combined with residential movement from the East End and a very strong emphasis on HE for their children and as well as seeing education as a key marker of middle-class status. Similarly, Nitin at King Henry's (Focus group 1) described how the upbringing of Indians, Sri Lankans and Chinese 'is more [...] education-oriented', supporting the analysis of Modood (2012) and others on the high importance placed on education. The residential parallel between the Indian and Jewish communities was noted in earlier research, though Phillips (1998: 1699) earlier doubted that substantial outward movement had taken place which now seems to be the case (Phillips et al., 2007; Butler and Hamnett, 2011; The Economist, 2013).

Within King Henry's itself, the Jewish-British Asian/British Indian comparison has direct relevance given that the former group has been replaced by the latter in recent years. During a brief discussion, the current KHS head mentioned how Jewish students had made up around a third of the intake when he arrived in the early 2000s, but this was now down to a handful in each year. This cannot be corroborated empirically here, and deserves its own explanation (the growth of local Jewish schools, private and state, and the continued movement out into Hertfordshire may all be involved). It is however, interesting to note a similar trend reported in the Good Schools' Guide in their review of a local private school located just over the border in Hertfordshire. Here too the Jewish intake had been falling as North London Asian middle-class students increased. The latter had a (sic.) 'ferocious work ethic' and their preference for science subjects led to an ethnic divide within the sixth form (Good Schools Guide, 2014). This concentration of British-Asian students in science and vocationally-oriented subjects has been confirmed at university-level (Singleton and Longley, 2008: 648-649) and was also discussed in focus groups at KHS and by Chelvy at HBS. It is crucial to recognize here the role of the suburban grammar in acting as a conduit to traditionally white- and middle-class dominated universities and managerial/professional occupations after that. Moreover, it is not only access to the Russell Group but increasingly access to a sub-set within that group, the 'golden triangle' which Wakeling and Savage (2015b) have shown to be strongly related to the British elite and NS-SEC 1. Whilst upward mobility into elite occupations does not mean the end of inequalities (Friedman et al., 2015), this suburban grammar circuit certainly reinforces access to universities dominated by the elite and established middle-class.

The process of suburbanization combining with grammar school use is part of a strong desire for upward social mobility, as Chelvy explained, 'They [her parents] were always like, grammar school is the only way we're ever going to get forwards.' As in Birmingham (Abbas, 2007), parents were highly invested, both personally and to varying degrees financially, in attaining a grammar school place as a means of upward mobility for working-class families or the reproduction of a hard won professional middle-class status (Phillips and Sarre, 1995; Robinson, 1988). This led to a highly risky strategy in this particular case, with Chelvy's parents not applying to any local state schools despite initially only being on the waiting list for HBS. There are important historical parallels here, with the process of suburbanization long having been associated with the expression of upward mobility and aspiration to higher status employment for children (Banks, 1955: 4). These associations between suburban life and middle-class educational and professional aspiration are deeply rooted in British social history. Charles Booth described the development of the 'new middle-class' in London's suburbs 'as the great social fact of today [...] within their circle religion and education find their greatest response [...]' (Booth, 1902: 201. In Hapgood, 2000: 48-49). In the late 19th century Western suburban development around Kensington providing 'visible evidence of the formation of an upper middle class', a group wishing to claim and assert aristocratic gentility (Reeder, 1968: 255-256). Nevertheless the association between suburbanization, grammar schooling and the middle classes runs deep, as Stuart Hall (1974. In Raynor, 1974: 51) noted:

The great grammar schools – often the creations of the rising bourgeoisie – have arisen within the city, but as annexes to the more spacious middle-class suburbs: the playing fields abut on their lawns

This is particularly true of KHS, whose playing fields literally abut on the lawns of rows of late 19th century detached and semi-detached housing. Whilst Hall's historical gloss on the older grammars as the 'creations' of a rising upper-middle class requires historical finessing, there is an important parallel in the association between new social formations, urban development and schooling.

The combining of these three processes is exactly what we are seeing in the case of KHS and HBS. Since the re-introduction of selection at the end of the 1980s, King Henry's rise has been associated with drive of ethnic-minority families for educational 'success', with many of those families also living in suburban residences. At a micro-level for students at both HBS and King Henry's, grammar school education is being used as a way of asserting, attaining or ensuring reproduction of middle-class status. In Chelvy's case in particular her

parental background was far less middle-class than some of the King Henry's boys mentioned above. There is the need as Phillips and Sarre (1995: 76) noted, for caution in claims about class and race and in this case the British-Asian circuits into London's grammars are not the exclusive preserve of children from higher-status families. Her dad owned a petrol station in Nottingham and lived there, visiting London at weekends. He went bankrupt in year 11 as Chelvy explained in the context of discussing the school's intake:

Chelvy: I think everyone was either working-class or middle-class but the middle class was everyone that lived in Hampstead or Golders Green that type of area but most of us who had come from Harrow or Wembley or whatever, were generally working-class. Our parents had similar kinds of jobs, everyone was kind of similar.

S: What kind of jobs did people have?

Chelvy: So most of my friends' parents were like accountants, working in finance - office jobs, some of them their mums didn't work, it was that kind of background.

[...] at the end of year 11 his business went down and it all messed up, so he came back down [to London] and he was unemployed for a very long time and *that's when I started seeing the differences within my school.*

(My emphasis. Chelvy, HBS)

This quote reveals the complexities of class within this suburban British-Asian grammar school circuit. Whilst students like her from North-West London were primarily 'working-class', it was not clear whether this included those friends with parents working as in accountancy/finance. Nonetheless, earlier in the interview she explained how the white-British middle-class students at HBS were often from Hampstead and Golders Green with a Jewish contingent within that grouping. Unlike the long London commutes of her and her friends, these students 'lived within that area, no-one had travelled [it was] particularly ethnic people that travelled'. Although students of colour form a majority of the intake, in both HBS and King Henry's there is a substantial local white middle-class presence.

Furthermore the difference in locality and distance travelled for local white middle-class students as opposed to the suburban British-Asian students reveals a key dimension to these circuits. Chelvy commented earlier that 'my mum found out through family, cos' obviously in Harrow no one knows where Henrietta Barnett is unless you go there or know someone who goes there.' Just as there are many post-war memories of largely white working-class students' journeys to suburban grammar schools from working-class neighbourhoods (Shrosbree, 1988; Black-Hawkins, 2001; Hoggart, 2009; Galvani, 2010), attending HBS or King Henry's means travelling far beyond the everyday geographical

knowledge of most British Asian families living in North-West London. Post-war working-class students in grammar schools were a new, larger generation of non-middle class students making the socio-spatial journey 'upward' and, often, outward, to and through the grammar school. These suburban British-Asian students are also breaking new ground, with all the challenges this implies.

The gruelling nature of the long commute was also discussed at KHS with Anish (Focus Group 2) describing how extra-curricular activities after school meant missing the school bus. Afterwards it was 'a *trek* [original emphasis] getting home. Over two hours on the bus.' In contrast on my first day in the school I witnessed a white student calling home in the reception having forgotten his swimming kit. He told his mum 'Don't worry, you don't need to rush, PE only starts in half an hour.' Presumably then, his journey to school was short; the immediate neighbourhood surrounding the school is 46% NS-SEC 1-2 and over 68.5% white-British (UK Data Explorer, 2012). Schools like King Henry's and HBS, these suburban conduits to elite universities and the middle-class professions beyond, are certainly changing in response to the new suburban British-Asian circuits that now run through them and dominate their intake, particularly with the science-maths focus of students and parents. However, that does not mean that these circuits, these collective individual trajectories composed of bus journeys and daily routines, are not inflected by ethnic segregation, even in London. The continuing presence of a group of *local* white middle-class students, albeit now a minority of an increasingly diverse suburban intake, represents the continued racial segregation of certain older suburbs. These neighbourhoods remain white-dominated even amidst the super-diversity of London and provide a maintained *local* white middle-class circuit into the grammars. In many ways, this is a mutation of the old grammar school divide between those 'from detached homes and with standard English voices' (Evans 1991. Cited in: Galvani, 2010) and those working-class students taking 'a bus ride to a leafy Surrey village [...] a different world' (Black-Hawkins, 2001: 36). This division is now not only classed but also 'racialized'.⁶⁷

5.7 The rise of the British-Asian grammar circuit and the 'actual – determinate – porousness' of elite education

⁶⁷ That is not to say that there were not ethnic-minority students in pre-comprehensivisation grammar schools, although their memories seem to have been marginalised within the copious writing on the history of the tripartite divide.

These London grammars, which sit both within the field of 'super-state' schools of London and the broader Crown Heartland educational infrastructure, are no longer the implicitly white grammars of the 'leafy suburbs' even if this short-hand still applies to many of them. The rise of the suburban British-Asian circuit has transformed certain institutions and whilst this is not limited to London, the metropolitan state-financed selective grammars belong to this major concentration of elite educational institutions clustered around London. As was discussed in the previous chapter, those state schools sending larger percentages of their students to Oxbridge are primarily state grammars, with certain notable exceptions. The two grammars discussed here challenge the very top of this hierarchy, the apex of the independent sector, creating a state-sponsored circuit of education amongst the elite sub-field of London schools revealed in the previous chapter. Within these hyper-selective state grammars, the distinction between state and private is at its most blurred.

Both King Henry's and HBS are adapting and have adapted to the demographic changes to their suburban intake, particularly with the growth in science A-levels, but these schools are also shaping their students. At King Henry's in particular, British-Indian and ethnic minority students are being sucked into a particular conservative, revanchist form of traditional British education. Caution is needed here, as the healthy scepticism of the school with regards to 'donations' reveal that students have some agency and a clear awareness of some of the more absurd practices within the school. Nevertheless, neo-liberal school reform has been used, in the case of King Henry's, to bolster and re-make the old, deep structures and practices of elitist, classed forms of British schooling. But something deeper is at work, the broad project at King Henry's is to revert to meeting the 'criteria that count' and these criteria are those of the deeply ossified educational culture concentrated in, but not exclusive to, the Crown Heartland's educational infrastructure. The idea of the 'gentlemanly ethos' of rugby, is combined with the rigorous extension of the prefect system, setting and examinations – these are the barely adapted values of the late 19th/early 20th elitist educational culture and hierarchies which have never truly been challenged in British society. The institution this new circuit of education is running through is deeply conservative and culturally regressive in its organisation and aims. More broadly the re-asserted 'gentlemanly' culture that has been restored to the school has deep historical roots (Anderson, 2007). Schools like King Henry's show the long resilience of this conservative educational culture which, as Johnson (1989: 103) argued, can be viewed through the lens of the Anderson-Nairn-Rubinstein thesis, though as noted in (Section 2.5.2, p. 40) this requires some amendments. This culture is still deeply entwined with and shaped by the mode of sponsored mobility into elite educational institutions (Turner, 1960: 864) which still pervades English education.

What is at work in the circuit analysed here is a broader dynamic within capitalist social reproduction through schooling in England. This is the partial porousness of the English elite to new social formations that Perry Anderson (1964) referred to and which several other social historians and sociologists confirmed (Laski, 1928; Jenkins and Jones, 1950; Wilkinson, 1962). For the new white-collar middle classes of the 19th century it was the possibility of 'individual vertical ascent' (Anderson, 1964: 31-33) into the new elite or the upper levels of the middle class to which access is always open for 'a select few' which became a key goal in the education of their children. These circuits of sponsored mobility (Turner, 1960) reached their ultimate expression in the post-war grammar school, spreading this logic of permeating individual ascent downwards to the working-class scholarship girls and boys of the post-war period. This deep logic of absorbing new social formations through highly-selective educational processes first into elite educational institutions and then, for some at least, into elite and upper-middle class forms of professional employment is replaying itself in the 21st century (Gamsu, 2015a). What we see now, in the case of the British-Indian middle class in particular, is the same process, albeit hard fought and with all the difficulties of deeply rooted structural racism. Nonetheless the logic of selective inclusion in the upper tiers of the British class system through elite forms of British education, and suburban positions in the housing market, is the same. The same porousness to new social formations is there. Co-option has always been a key element of elite formation and diversification to include new, potentially threatening groups (Pareto, 1935: 1796). The circuit of education may be new, but the deep-rooted culture and logic of English social reproduction lies undisturbed and dynamic in its capacity to respond to new social formations.

5.8 Alternative circuits within the super-states: super-gentrification and Camden School for Girls

Whilst the primary focus of this chapter has been those very high-attaining grammars which are dominant within the sub-field of London's elite schools, I wish to briefly examine the role of certain comprehensive schools within the field of elite London schools suggested in chapter four. It is true that within the very apex of London's school system, those state schools which have stronger links to Oxbridge are largely the selective grammars with particular and exceptional histories as King Henry's highlights. However, more broadly within modularity class one, there are as noted above, a number of comprehensive schools with

sixth forms and the institutional trajectory of one of these schools as well as the contemporary circuits running through it are examined here. It also provides a useful contrast to King Henry's in indicating how the white metropolitan upper-middle class operates within the comprehensive system.

Camden School for Girls is a voluntary-aided grammar school, with a sponsoring foundation which also manages a prestigious private girls' school (North London Collegiate School – NLCS). CSG was originally founded in 1871 in the inner-London borough of Camden as a sister school to its now independent school counter-part, with the aim of providing education for less affluent professional families (Burchell, 1971: 12). Whilst NLCS eventually re-located out to the suburbs in 1940 (Gamsu, 2015b), Camden Girls remained in inner London and became a voluntary-aided grammar school in 1910. This saw the school gradually receive greater oversight and funding from the LCC, and in turn the ILEA, which would lead to comprehensivization in 1976. Long before this, Camden Girls, similarly to King Henry's, began to establish and reinforce its own autonomous academic reputation, moving beyond its early role as a preparatory school for a small number of students who went on to its more prestigious sister school. A new inter-war head deliberately set out to construct an academic reputation built around the sixth form:

[her] great achievement [...] was the creation of the strong sixth form tradition. She saw from the first that in the post-war world it was the only way in which the School could reach a state of viability [...] by the outbreak of the second World War, "Camden Girls" was firmly established as a grammar school of high standing [...] regularly sending its pupils onto University courses.

(Burchell, 1971: 74-75)

King Henry's and Camden Girls were indicative of a much broader trend in the re-organised state grammar schools during the inter-war period, as these schools saw replicating the public school sixth form as a key element to asserting prestige and status (Reid and Filby, 1982: 110-115). There was a dynamic capacity within the education system, and these schools in particular, 'for creating traditions overnight' (Ibid: 109). An example of this was the school's adoption of a Foundation Day service beginning in 1900 with a service at St Paul's Cathedral led by the Archbishop of Canterbury with readings from the Master of Trinity College Cambridge:

It was an impressive occasion, and the first commemorative service of its kind – celebrated by women, but modelled on the traditional Founders' Services of the old Universities. In this way it had a certain continuity of scholastic tradition [...]

The prestige and scholastic intent of the ceremony described here clearly echoes that of many late 19th century public boys' schools whose Founders' Days were celebrated nationally and even internationally, indicating their status as institutions forming the British imperial elite (Honey, 1977: 155). However, the two girls' schools' links to universities, and especially Oxbridge, were much more restricted than for their male counter-parts (Pedersen, 1979: 73-74). It is important to note here the significant role of Camden Girls and its sister school in education for women. Secondary education was male-dominated in the 19th century, a situation which only began to be challenged nationally with the expansion of girls' schools for the middle classes in the second half of the 19th century (Dyhouse, 1981: 56-57). Whilst Camden was unusual in having been founded to cater for a lower-middle class intake, the larger girls' secondary institutions were dominated by the upper-middle class (Pedersen, 1979: 77-79). Even in schools like Camden, middle-class girls continued to form the majority of its intake (Burchell, 1971: 56) with intake only changing more substantially after 1944. This change at the end of the war, was described by the then head as providing a challenge to teaching practices as a larger proportion of girls arrived whose parents 'were without the experience of the aims and life of a grammar school and communication with them was not always easy.' Despite this influx, the school retained the 'support of many old Camden families' and in the post-war period:

'there was a solid core of girls who had been brought up in the past tradition and they helped to maintain the confidence of continuity and set standards. Especially was this so in the sixth form which remained a significant influence [on the school]'.
(Burchell, 1971: 96-97)

This insight reveals a tantalising glimpse of how the changing urban geography around the school meshed with school reform. In the late 19th and early 20th century the middle-class population of the local area declined as suburbanization continued (Watson, 2000: 72). For CSG's sister school, this contributed to increased commuting of students in from suburban Middlesex, contributing to its eventual re-location (Gamsu, 2015b). This was also reported as having had some impact on CSG, particularly as the build-up of light industry around the school made it less visually appealing to students (Burchell, 1971: 77-78, 97-98). Despite this process and the increased working-class intake after 1944, the 'solid core' of local 'old Camden' families suggests an important continuity of class and the dominance of the sixth form in influencing the school's ethos. The key influence of the sixth form on the school remains crucial to understanding the contemporary position of the school within the sub-field of London's elite schools.

5.9 After the comprehensive transition: 'the sixth form is the jewel in the crown'

It is this historical dominance of the sixth form within CSG which has remained a key historical constant since the 1930s despite the changes in its immediate neighbourhood and organization. Whilst retaining voluntary-aided status, the school ended selection in 1976 with the last grammar school cohort leaving in 1981. Unlike with King Henry's, interviewing was not possible at Camden Girls despite various attempts to gain access. Nevertheless, an analysis of NPD data, combined with an interview with an ex-student who left in 2013 and various other sources are used to piece together the institutional trajectory following comprehensivization in 1976 and to analyse the current circuits running through the school. Central to my analysis here will be function and role of the sixth form, which the Good Schools' Guide (2014) describes as 'the jewel in the crown' at CSG. Before examining how the school's sixth form operates as a distinctive and separate body within the school, I first describe the contemporary urban context of the school and how this is reflected in the school's intake at 11 and how this differs to the intake at 16.

The school currently sits within a locality which has experienced substantial gentrification over the last 30-40 years but retains a significant proportion of council housing. Several accounts of gentrification have revealed substantial increases in the local professional middle-class population within the neighbourhood since the 1960s, whilst the working-class and private-renting population has declined, having very likely been displaced (Hamnett and Williams, 1980; Atkinson, 2000). As has been well documented elsewhere, there is a clear link between 'desirable' schooling and house prices (Gibbons and Machin, 2003; Leech and Campos, 2003; Hansen, 2014) and this also contributes to gentrification of certain neighbourhoods, leaving some students effectively displaced from local secondary schools (Butler et al., 2013). The distance to school restriction on Camden Girls is now very tight, with new entrants in 2014 having to live within 1.256 miles to sit the banded entrance exam which ensures a balanced intake by attainment. In contrast, if online reminiscences from ex-students attending the school in the 1980s are to be believed, with students having lived 3-5 miles away in the 1980s. Despite successive waves of gentrification, within this distance (1.256 miles) local wards contain between 25-40% of social housing tenants, and though NS-SEC groups 1-2 form the largest groups in the surrounding wards, substantial proportions of classes 4-7 are also resident (UK Data Explorer, 2012). Relatively speaking its share of students claiming Free School Meal (FSM) students is the third lowest of the borough's 11 schools in 2014 (DfE, 2015d; DfE, 2015c) at 26.1%, which is slightly below the

borough average of 28.5% but above the national average of 13.9% of FSM eligible students. As has recently been argued (Taylor, 2015), FSM students have been falling in central London implying that the case study evidence presented by Butler *et al.* (2013) has become a more generalised process with working-class children being gentrified out of inner London schools.

Despite these forces, the school remains an institution with a significant working-class intake at 11 but the demographic of the intake changes substantially between Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 (Tables 4 and 5, p. 182). This distinction is crucial in understanding how circuits operate internally within the school and how the school's current position within the sub-field of London's super-state schools is formed. Looking at the NPD data for cohort born in 1991-92 and finishing Key Stage 4 in 2007/08 we can see a distinctive ethnic/class bias to the intake at 11, with a strong white middle-class bias and a mostly ethnic-minority working-class group of students. Data on NS-SEC is only collected by HESA on entry to university and must also be suppressed and rounded to the nearest interval of 5. This means it is very likely that the number of working-class students and students of colour are underestimated, as the non-classified and missing data suggests. Despite the inadequacies of this data at Key Stage 4 it still provides a striking contrast to the demographic breakdown by class and ethnicity for the same cohort in Key Stage 5. What occurs is a very large influx of white middle-class students which shifted the cohort from being just under half white middle-class (NS-SEC groups 1 or 2) at Key Stage 4, to a sixth form year group which is almost 60% white middle class. This clear segregation of the school in class terms underlines how the sixth form is powerfully oriented towards middle-class social reproduction.

Parental NS-SEC	Ethnicity					Row Total	Row %
	Black Afr/Caribb'n/Othr	Bangladeshi	Mixed Heritage	Other Ethnic Grp	White Brit /Irish/Othr		
1. Higher managerial & professional	0	0	x	0	10	10	13%
2. Lower managerial & professional	x	0	x	x	15	20	25%
3. Intermediate	0	0	0	0	x	x	x
4. Small employers & Own account workers	0	x	0	0	x	x	x
5. Lower supervisory and technical	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Semi-routine	x	x	x	0	x	x	x
7. Routine	0	x	0	0	0	x	x
9. Non-classified	x	x	x	x	x	15	19%
NA (students not attending HE)	x	x	x	0	x	15	19%
Column Total	x	15	15	0	45	80	100%
Column %	x	19%	19%	0%	56%	100%	

Table 5 Camden Girls: Cohort of students born 1991/92 finishing Key Stage 4 in 2007/08. Parental social class and ethnicity.

Data: (DfE and HESA, 2014)

Parental NS-SEC	Ethnicity							Row Total	Row Total (%)
	Black Af/Ca/Otr	Chinese/ Other Asian	Bangladeshi	Mixed Heritage	NA or Refused	Other Ethnic Grp	White Brit/Irish/Othr		
1. Higher managerial & professional	0	0	0	10	x	0	40	55	28%
2. Lower managerial & professional	x	0	x	x	x	x	50	60	31%
3. Intermediate Occupations	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	5%
4. Small employers & Own account workers	0	x	x	x	0	0	x	x	3%
5. Lower supervisory/technical occupations	0	0	0	0	0	0	x	0	0%
6. Semi-routine occupations	x	0	x	x	x	0	x	x	3%
7. Routine Occupations	0	0	x	0	0	0	x	0	0%
9. Non-classified	x	0	x	x	x	x	20	35	18%
NA (Not university in 2010-11/11-12)	x	0	x	x	x	0	15	25	13%
Column Total	x	0	10	30	10	0	140	195	100%
Column Total (%)	3%	0%	5%	15%	5%	0%	72%	100%	

Table 6 Camden Girls sixth form: Cohort of students born 1991/92, parental social class and ethnicity.

Data: (DfE and HESA, 2014)

The school's position as a prestigious inner-London comprehensive with strong links to the metropolitan political elite means there is a wealth of qualitative material to examine in relation to the school as a whole and the sixth form in particular. What is emphasised quite clearly in the Good Schools' Guide (2014) review of the school is the 'traditional and academic' nature of the sixth form with provision of Oxbridge 'masterclasses' and a concentration on traditional humanities, arts and social science subjects. The crucial point which cements the school's position within the field of London's elite schools is selection on entry to the sixth, or as the Good Schools' Guide puts it 'the sixth form [is] decidedly less mixed-ability than the lower school, as only those who make the grades make the transfer'. This was corroborated by interviews with an ex-student and an HE adviser working in another local sixth form:

Sol: What about the make-up of people at 6th form, I've read that quite a lot of people come in from the independent sector was that also your experience?

Sam: Yeah definitely, quite a lot of my friends who came in who were girls came from private day schools, [...] It's quite an interesting one, because up until 16 there was a really big mix class-wise and then they cream off the top, well you have to get, I can't remember the exact grades but you have to get I think 5 B's to get in which definitely pushes out people [...] they all go to 'Unity Sixth Form'.⁶⁸ And talking to people, I didn't really talk to people in younger years cos' we were all in our separate building, but there was definitely, not exactly a class thing but a lot of people were pushed out to make room for the people...

Sol: It's quite ethnically-mixed around Camden, is the lower school more ethnically-mixed?

Sam: Yes definitely, definitely. And I think part of it was because... all of the subjects were put into abilities and, speaking to friends who went to the lower school, it was quite hard to move up or down, so once you kind of were in one you were stuck and it was decided quite early on whether you were going to be able to be there for 6th form or not.

(Sam, student at Camden Girls, 2009-2011, at a Hertfordshire private school before)

David: Well lots of people at 'Unity Sixth Form' say that Camden's got a bit up itself really, certainly in 6th form, and I've met some of the staff there and they just seem to have a completely different approach. They have this thing for their sixth form where you have to get a B in maths to go there at all. And apparently each year the parents,

⁶⁸ Unity Sixth Form is a large sixth form consortia between several schools operating in North London.

year 11 parents are up in arms about it, well what's that all about? It's just a filter, which is what a lot of uni's do. They just put in filters to get the numbers down.

(David, HE adviser, Unity Sixth Form)

The role of entry to the sixth as an academic point of selection is central to ensuring the position of 'comprehensive' super-state schools operating within the sub-field of London's elite sixth forms. Where schools are primarily reliant on the distance criteria to select applicants, there is certainly a house-price effect which exacerbates broader exclusionary and displacement processes caused by gentrification. Nevertheless, the complexity of the housing development in large cities means that it is unusual to have a school which is overwhelmingly white middle-class at 11. It is the internal processes of selection and setting which operate during secondary education which lay the foundations for the rarefied social intake at 16. Camden is particularly extreme, even within the sub-field of elite London schools, for having such a high proportion of (white) middle-class students in its sixth form. This is in part due to the large influx of students from the private sector and with nearly 50 students, Camden takes the third largest number of students from independent schools. However, whilst those coming in from the private sector are overwhelmingly middle class (over 70% in SEC 1 or 2), just over 50% of students entering Camden from the state sector share the same parental occupational class. In contrast, the students leaving Camden (n=25) are less affluent with only a fifth being in social class 1 or 2 though the data does not allow a conclusive commentary on this. The movement of these students, and the clear institutional segmentation of HE destinations for those who leave compared to those who stay is visualized in the Sankey diagram below (Figure 1). Their departure certainly contributes to the relative dominance of the middle class at post-16, but this is an institutional culture which was built up before comprehensivization and retained afterward. The rise of the institutions within London's sub-field of elite schools has to be understood as an accretive process built up with the clear intention of school heads, but compounded by national policy. Institutional positions within the field are formed through the movement of thousands of individuals collectively patterned in circuits which have shifted as the urban landscape has changed.

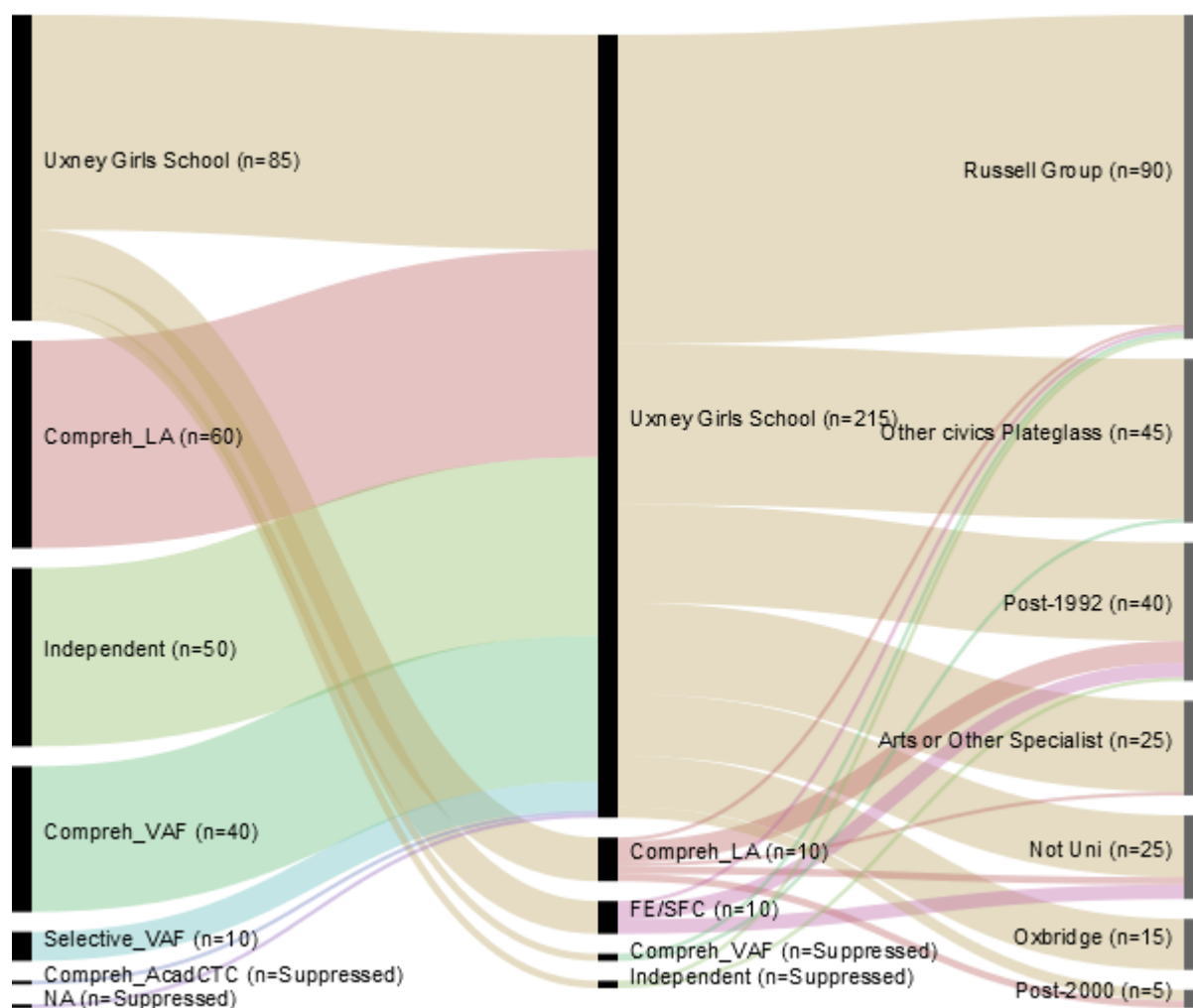


Figure 24 Sankey showing School type of students in at Key Stage 4 (first bar), school destination at 16 (second bar) and HE destination at 18/19 (third bar).⁶⁹

Camden Girls is very unusual in its class composition and private school intake, but it is also symbolic of the unchallenged academic culture of ‘the sixth’ and how ‘sought-after’ comprehensives tended to be those which replicated (or maintained) the academic traditions of the grammar and public school systems (Reid and Filby, 1982: 237). Especially in former grammar schools like Camden (Kerckhoff et al., 1997; Harland, 1988: 409), school sixth forms in particular have remained organized around these dominant, prestige modes of HE (i.e. Oxbridge and the Russell Group), even if, as we will see in the next chapter, most students in these schools do not attend these institutions. In the case of Camden, the school’s proven record of sending students to elite universities acts as a key attracting force

⁶⁹ Abbreviations are as follows: VAF, Voluntary-Aided or Foundation school. AcadCTC, comprehensive or city technology college. FE/SFC, Further Education or Sixth Form College.

for those coming in from the independent sector. The fact that over the 20th century it accumulated historic links with 'the universities' in the pre-1992 sense, and maintained and reinforced these links after comprehensivization is central in ensuring the school's position amongst the elite field of London schools. It also underlines the deep inequalities within the comprehensive system which, from a governance perspective (though this does *not* equate to an automatic change in socio-spatial patterns of local social reproduction) has been dramatically transformed by the last 5 years of academy reform. Geographically, it also indicates a clear differentiation of strategies being used by particular fractions of London's white middle class compared to the suburban British Asian middle class at KHS. Playing the system to ensure entry at 11 with the tacit knowledge that setting will ensure internal segregation, or entering at 16 from the private sector or other state school implies substantial economic and cultural capital and a certain confidence in the system and their children. Moreover, it underlines an implicit (white) middle-class compact based on the sixth as a separate 'school within a [comprehensive] school': diversity of intake and ability, but carefully segmented and streamed, will be present up to 16, thereafter an academically selective sixth should ensure middle-class social reproduction through prestigious universities and courses.

CSG is also a school which is historically and in its current intake, without provincial parallel. The massive influx from the private sector and the very large white middle-class sixth form is not replicated in Sheffield in any of the state comprehensives of the affluent south-western suburbs. Moreover, it is unlikely that this occurs outside the South-East more broadly, at least in terms of scale, as the private sector is so much smaller in the North and private to state transfers are thus also likely to be smaller. What gives the school a further and distinctive metropolitan habitus are its strong links to the metropolitan elite. In particular, it is the local, inner London cultural and political elite with whom the school is particularly associated, leading to a newspaper hatchet-job, which attacked the school's supposed 'comprehensive' status (Malone, 2009). Donations were central to this, describing a fundraising event at which £17000 was raised with a Labour House of Lords peer entering into a bidding war with the then poet laureate for £550 opera tickets. The GBCS cultural elite was also found clustered in this neighbourhood in Cunningham and Savage's (2015: 342-343) recent analysis of the micro-geography of London's elites. The importance of donations within the field of London's elite schools is clear. Whilst the article clearly had a political agenda, it underlines the distinctions within the comprehensive system. A combination of internal processes of streaming, growing gentrification, private sector/middle-class influx at

16 and the continuation of the pre-comprehensive traditions has pushed CSG into the sub-field of London's elite schools.

5.10 Conclusion

These case studies of King Henry's and, though in less depth, HBS and CSG, indicate how the institutions within the sub-set of 'super-state' schools operate. There are distinctive cultural 'traditions' and selective practices which provide these institutions with symbolic capital. This in turn positions them within the sub-field of elite schools suggested in the previous chapter, blurring the boundaries between state and private in London's field of elite schools. However, these practices are equally accompanied by a distinctive set of powerful, and at times exclusionary, socio-spatial circuits which school's also operate within. Clearly King Henry's and Camden in particular have distinctive institutional trajectories, cultures and local circuits. Nevertheless the powerful role of a sixth form which dominates the organisation of the school unites both in determining these schools' positions. The strong focus on traditional academic subjects, the bias towards Oxbridge, albeit with different subject emphases – science and business at King Henry's, arts and humanities at CSG, significant, but very different middle-class intakes, all of these factors are central to these institutions' position. Whilst this provides fuel for Reid and Filby's (1982) argument about the unreformed tradition of the academic sixth form and the fundamental adoption by certain state comprehensives of traditions of the 'public' and grammar school traditions, their argument requires qualification.

It is undoubtedly the case that there is a deep, ossified and relatively unreformed culture of academic study within the sixth form with a curriculum still heavily influenced by late 19th century elite culture (Williams, 2011: 181). Invented traditions, local-level customs and practices are key to how this has been maintained at an organisational level, particularly at KHS. Nevertheless more broadly in thinking about how the sixth form operates as a national pattern of educational organisation it is useful to refer to Williams' (2011: 73) less deterministic notion of the 'culture of selective tradition'. When cultural processes cease to be an active part of the present, when they are 'no longer being lived', the survival of these forms of culture become 'selective traditions', contemporary interpretations of that past cultural form, selected and controlled by particular interests, class interests amongst others, in a process which 'is not an absolute body of work but a continual selection and interpretation' (Williams, 2011: 70-73). The dominance of the sixth as a selective

organisational form with strongly classed cultural tropes can be thought of through this lens. The 'gentlemanly ethos' of King Henry's is also a particular example of how elements of the elite/middle-class white male culture of nineteenth century elite education continue to be selectively re-worked and retain their distinction and symbolic value. This selective set of traditions is national but also, in the concentration of institutions and the sites where the most powerful examples of the sixth as a cultural-organisational form exist, biased towards London/ROSE.

This distinctive south-eastern and London-centric dynamic to this field of elite institutions and the cultural traditions associated with it, has to be understood through the interplay between institutional forms and the locally classed and ethnically differentiated circuits which run through urban and educational spaces. In the case of King Henry's the suburban British-Asian grammar circuit has parallels in Birmingham and to a lesser extent Leicester. What gives this circuit its metropolitan specificity is the sheer number of students the school sends to Oxbridge and the broader constellation of elite south-eastern and primarily London schools of which it forms part. King Henry's not only blurs the line between elite state and elite private schools, it challenges at the very apex of the independent sector and indicates a significant shift in patterns of elite social reproduction and class formation. Cultural and political elites are also clustered in and around London and whilst the detailed classificatory data provided in the Great British Class Survey (Savage et al., 2013; Cunningham and Savage, 2015) is not available, it is clear from case study of Camden Girls that both the urban dynamics, the combination of gentrification and tightening catchments, and the furore over parental donations, occur in ways which portray the entrenched power and wealth of the capital.

What is also suggested here is the dynamic of quite dramatic changes in intake and organization at King Henry's over the last 30 years in contrast to the relative stability of the inner-London white middle-class circuits at Camden, though more historical work would be necessary to confirm this. Both institutions also experienced the transition to comprehensive admissions at 11, albeit temporarily in the case of King Henry's (not at all in the case of HBS). Similarly both, be it gentrification at Camden or British-Asian suburbanization for King Henry's, have been strongly influenced by the substantial urban change occurring within the revanchist global city. Despite these changes what ties these schools together is a particular institutional trajectory post-comprehensivization which allowed them to retain and extend

their positions as conduits for middle/upper-middle class social reproduction in London's field of schools. This is by no means limited to these two schools.

Within the elite sub-set of schools suggested in chapter four, only 16 of those schools were non-selective. However, even within these only five were not previously grammar schools, a number which falls to just three if we exclude comprehensive schools which were formed from mergers between secondary modern schools and grammars. In institutional terms, for these 11 former grammar schools, what has occurred over the last 30 years has been a non-linear set of processes which have led these schools to re-assert, preserve or extend their previous institutional status. These historical trajectories underline how 'super-state' schools have constructed their position within the field. The current obsession with governance forms and school sponsorship may be a cynical cover for the ideological weakening of state control of education and have certainly provided mixed results in terms of attainment (Hutchings et al., 2014; Lupton and Thomson, 2015). However, to the extent that claims are made about seriously challenging educational inequalities, fitting contemporary circuits at these 'super-state' schools into historical understandings reveals the long historical processes which underpin major institutional sites of educational power. Mossbourne Academy in Hackney has risen rapidly in terms of its attainment, at the cost of significant personal damage to teachers and students (Kulz, 2013), but it is still a long way from blurring the line between state and private sector as these institutions now do. Understanding the erosion of the state-private distinction requires a historical understanding of how institutional power and status is accumulated. Simultaneously, these institutions are shaped as circuits of education develop and shift around them with the development of new social formations; urban processes transforming London's field of housing and educational reform permitting particular institutional forms and family strategies which act to cement advantage.

In thinking about this field and set of circuits, it is necessary to think relationally, both within this elite field of schools and as it relates to other post-16 institutions more broadly. Beyond this though, this relational thinking must be spatial, both within London and, crucially beyond. There is as I outlined in the previous chapter a distinctive concentration of institutions in London, and there may also be some degree of qualitative difference in the inter-related set of institutional cultures which occur within this elite field of schools in and around London. The elite sporting circuits at King Henry's, the growth of a culture of donations across London's 'super-state' schools, are examples of processes which are absent in Northern cities like Sheffield and probably in many other provincial urban school systems. The blurring

of the line between state and private sectors is to some extent a national phenomenon, with the grammars of Manchester and Birmingham being indicative of this, but there is a cleavage between the London 'super-states' and the suburban state comprehensives in smaller cities. The 'stable enclavism' (Butler and Robson, 2003b) of the urban middle class around particular comprehensives is a national pattern which has a history. This colonisation of certain comprehensives form a national pattern of post-grammar social reproduction and these institutions are at the apex of many *local* provincial urban school systems. However, when it comes to providing access to Oxbridge, these institutions in themselves largely compete only at the lowest level in the national field.

In providing a historical analysis of how institutional trajectories have shaped the contemporary field of schooling in London, there is a need to acknowledge how these trajectories are shaped by micro-processes within the school in ways which my data does not always give access to. The central driving element in ensuring these state schools began to blur the line between state and private when it came to accessing prestige universities are slow, accretive, deliberate but also haphazard processes. The circuits which are discussed here are diverse in geographical and institutional terms, with quite particular residential housing markets, dynamics of 'race' and faith, particular local class formations and institutional forms, cultures and habituses. However, one distinctive similarity which pushes them together, both culturally and historically as we have seen here, and within the SNA in the previous chapter, is the strength of their ties to an elite sub-set of universities. These circuits form over time, sedimented at the confluence between institutional strategy, national and local education policy and the changing urban and social structures within which families and students are embedded. These are highly segregated and segmented circuits, but this segregation and segmentation are best understood not as flat inequalities in the form of segregation indices, but rather as dynamic processes. Multiple interwoven trajectories which, to students, do not appear linear and are never wholly determined though they are certainly structurally and collectively patterned. The power of thinking about socio-spatial and organizational patterns of social reproduction through field and circuits, is the capacity to think relationally about how forms of inequality operate. Class is not the only form of inequality at work, with race and gender certainly affecting the structure of the field of elite institutions and the shape of local circuits. In thinking about social reproduction and the segregation implicit within this, it is important to see these as processes, both for the institutions and the individuals involved. Social reproduction – through circuits and institutional fields operates like class:

class is not this or that part of the machine, but *the way the machine works* once it is set in motion—not this interest and that interest, but the *friction* of interests—the movement itself, the heat, the thundering noise.
(Thompson, 1965: 357)

6 Beneath the super-states: local middle-class continuity circuits and institutional hierarchies in a provincial city

6.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I outlined how a sub-set of 'super-state' schools developed in London which compete with the private sector in terms of Oxbridge and Russell Group admissions. I argued that even amongst the highest performing state schools in Sheffield, there were no schools which belonged to this sub-field of nationally elite state schools, though a clear hierarchy was also visible. I then examined the formation of certain circuits of education around these 'super-state' schools and described students' experiences of these processes. In this chapter, the focus turns to the role of school sixth forms in suburban areas with significant middle-class intakes. I explore how the circuits of education found in a suburban comprehensive, Valley Hills, which is considered a prestigious middle-class school in a Sheffield setting, have parallels with a newer school in North London, Woodtham Park. These parallels reveal the national patterns associated with the urban middle classes since at least the 1970s if not earlier (see section 2.6), based on *local* colonisation of primary schools and then certain secondary schools. However, there is a clear regional distinction in the status of Valley Hills' compared to Woodtham Park. Whilst in Sheffield, Valley Hills forms part of the sub-field of *locally* prestigious state and private schools suggested by the social network analysis, Woodtham Park in contrast, does not. What this highlights is the absence of the 'super-state' schools of the previous chapter in Sheffield, which underlines an important difference in how provincial urban class structures and distinctive patterns of residential change affect schools.

Moreover, the historical urban development of Sheffield has not seen the dramatic residential change that has contributed to the rise of the 'super-state' schools of the previous chapter; British-Indian/British-Sri-Lankan suburbanisation in the case of King Henry's in North London and white middle-class gentrification in the case of Camden School for Girls. Instead, the core urban-educational dynamic has been the maintenance of the dichotomous social divide between the south-western suburbs and the more white working-class North and East of the city with largely working-class ethnic-minority populations concentrated in the central wards on either side of this divide. In the 1980s, the preservation of school sixth forms in the South-West but not elsewhere exacerbated this socio-spatial division. This was

the latest flashpoint in a persistent historical conflict around education between the middle-class suburbs and the (generally) Labour council elected by the working-class North and East. The sixth form in Sheffield thus has a particular role of institutional distinction and shapes circuits of education which have been historically persistent despite major educational reform. By examining the history of the local institutional hierarchy, we will see how circuits of education, and the patterns of social reproduction they represent, are not simply the outcome of individual decision-making but are the result of collective struggle over urban and educational spaces.

London's 'super-state' schools form a sub-field of elite state/private schools within the capital, but they also sit within a broader south-eastern infrastructure of elite and middle-class social reproduction in England. In Sheffield the loose south-western constellation of suburban state schools with sixth forms form the locus for middle-class social reproduction and sit, with the city's two private schools, at the apex of the local hierarchy. But as noted in chapter four, all the state schools are also embedded in circuits to the local post-1992 university, Sheffield Hallam. Only the two private schools, and especially the girls' High School, do not operate this dual-facing role linked to local post-1992 as well as Russell Group institutions. There is thus a nested set of local and national institutional hierarchies at work, and the London-centric nature of the literature on urban school choice has tended to overlook some of these differences (Though on Manchester, see: Savage et al., 2005; For Bristol see: Bridge, 2006a). That these schools do not compete with the sub-field of London's elite state schools is in part a reflection of regional class structures and the long-standing absence of members of national elites from provincial urban school systems and, relatively speaking, from regional cities more generally.⁷⁰ The concentrated presence of Sheffield's local professional middle-class in these schools is sufficient to give them a distinctive institutional role, but in London a suburban comprehensive with a significant middle-class intake is a lesser mark of distinction.

This chapter begins (6.2) with a brief description of local neighbourhoods and histories of the two schools. The first substantive sub-section (6.23) examines the similar patterns of *local* middle-class circuits of education which reveal the broad similarities in the historical middle-

⁷⁰ In Yorkshire and Lancashire, the wealthiest industrialist and commercial 'plutocrats' of the North sent their sons to boarding schools in the South of England in the mid-late 19th century (Bryce, 1868: 720; Fitch, 1868: 147-148). With the exception of Rubinstein's (1986: 200-201) work there has been little attempt to provide more recent data on these elite 'cross-border flows' of students of school age to southern boarding schools.

class strategies that are in play. This sub-section also examines the clear parallels in these urban patterns of middle-class colonisation of a local primary with strong links to a sought-after, nearby secondary, with these students then continuing on to sixth form at the school. I then (6.34) examine the role of housing markets and entrance criteria in the two suburban case study schools, arguing that there are key differences between London and Sheffield. These findings suggest the more fraught nature of conflict over schooling in London as well as clear differences in the costs and accessibility of education in suburban neighbourhoods. This in turn has implications for regional patterns of class formation and what it means to be middle-class in provincial cities as opposed to London. In section 6.5, I outline the smooth transition to sixth form experienced by local middle-class students before examining the specificity of HE destinations in the Sheffield case. The strong links to local post-1992 institutions at Valley Hills highlights the differentiated nature of the local hierarchy of schooling in Sheffield, with even 'locally-elite' state schools primarily sending students to the post-1992 sector and especially Sheffield Hallam. Hence despite the similarities of local middle-class continuity circuits – local, smooth transitions between primary, secondary and post-16 for the suburban middle classes, the implications of these patterns have different meanings at a local level in a provincial city than they do in London.

This is the central sociological finding of this chapter, common strategies and patterns of circuits in urban-educational fields have different relative implications in terms of institutional status depending on the city in question. In particular, there is a distinctive difference between institutional hierarchies between schools in London and smaller provincial cities like Sheffield, without grammar school systems and where the population of the 'metropolitan' professional middle classes has been historically small relative to Manchester or Birmingham (Smith, 1982a: 257-258; Savage et al., 1995: 45). The final sub-section (6.6) examines the history of Sheffield's institutional hierarchy, arguing that circuits of education are not merely the result of collective patterns of individual choice, re-made over and over at a micro-level by the journeys and experiences of students. Instead, they must also be seen as the result of key moments of political struggle over urban and educational space which set the hierarchy between schools and post-16 institutions over the long-term. This section also once again underlines the varying forms and speeds of urban change in provincial and metropolitan cities with different implications for the hierarchical position of institutions within the local field of post-16.

6.2 School contexts – Valley Hills and Woodtham Park

The extent of recent urban and educational change that has occurred in and around Woodtham Park School has been much more rapid than that found at Valley Hills. The growth of the middle-class population of the neighbourhood's fringes, in effect the extended gentrification of a former Edwardian suburb, has coincided with the opening of Woodtham Park as a school in 1999. Moreover, recent changes in catchment area will likely combine to further enhance the exclusiveness of the school as it is now the most popular school in the borough in terms of applicants per place as we will see below. These conditions have seen the (re-)creation of a middle-class enclave and a set of local middle-class continuity circuits to accompany it, with middle-class students dominating the neighbouring primary school, and continuing on to Woodtham Park and its sixth form. That these circuits are not considered elite by local standards, though within the borough there is a clear awareness amongst students of the growing prestige of the school, reflects the more developed hierarchy of schools, even within the state sector alone. There is thus a nested local and regional hierarchy of suburban state comprehensives, with schools like Woodtham Park's having greater status in a city like Sheffield where the middle class does not sit alongside economic or cultural elites.

Valley Hills is a former secondary modern school founded in 1960 and located in the affluent and predominantly white South-Western suburbs of Sheffield. Somewhat similarly to Ashmole School in London (Good Schools Guide, 2014), the school made a gradual transition from former secondary modern to sought-after suburban comprehensive. Like another former secondary-modern in the city's South-Western suburbs, Valley Hills opened a sixth form in 1975 which became successful, reducing numbers at the sixth form of the neighbouring former grammar school (Cornwell, 2009: 17). Despite continuing to recruit from a diverse inner-city primary, an LEA measure to ensure the suburban schools were not exclusively white middle-class, the school primarily recruits from the more affluent neighbourhoods of the south-western suburbs where it is located. Under the Coalition government, Valley Hills opted out of LEA control in 2011, becoming a converter academy and has gradually built up a multi-academy trust of schools.⁷¹ The school came top of a national newspaper's comprehensive school league table in 2014 and is now the

⁷¹ The former head (now executive head of the trust) is also married to another head teacher who formed a second multi-school academy trust in Sheffield in 2014.

controversial sponsor to two secondary and three primary schools in working-class areas in the North and West of Sheffield.

In contrast to Valley Hills, Woodtham Park is, as noted above, much more recent institution. It is situated on the fringes of, Muswell Hill, an Edwardian suburb which has become synonymous with middle-class child-rearing over the last two decades. The neighbouring school, Fortismere, is one of the few 'comprehensive' institutions in the elite sub-field suggested in chapter five. The latter sends a slightly larger cohort to Russell Group universities than Woodtham Park in percentage terms (37% as opposed to 32%) and in particular sends far fewer students to post-1992 institutions (23% as opposed to 38%). Relocation to Muswell Hill was already considered a default option for inner-city gentrifiers with children in the mid-2000s (Butler et al., 2007: 10) with the specific aim of accessing Fortismere. Originally built as a 'high class' suburban development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Long, 1993: 60), many of the large Edwardian houses were broken up into flats during the 1970s.⁷² However, it was seen as under-going gentrification in the mid-1990s (McDowell, 1997: 2071). Having long since stopped the bussing programme that challenged class and racial segregation of schooling in Haringey in the 1970s (Davies, 1976), Fortismere also moved away from local authority control in 2007, becoming a Foundation School. Woodtham Park is situated on the Eastern flank of Muswell Hill, closer to the more deprived areas of the borough, as a result its intake has been more mixed than Fortismere. Despite this, it still forms part of the same process of gentrification as Fortismere, as the area immediately around the school effectively amounts to an overspill area of middle-class 'gentrification'. This is particularly true as the opening of a new secondary school to the East in 2010 will restrict intakes from less affluent neighbourhoods. Woodtham Park forms part of the (re-)creation of an extended enclave of insulated middle-class social reproduction (Atkinson, 2006) on the suburban edge of Inner London.

Despite quite different local urban and educational histories, what connects these two schools is the role of a strong group of *local* middle-class students attending the same feeder primary school and staying on into the sixth form. In the section below I describe how these contexts form particular local, middle-class 'continuity' circuits where students follow a pathway through a local middle-class dominated primary school to a nearby secondary and on into its sixth form. These examples show how in more suburban areas, stable 'enclaves',

⁷² I lived in a flat in one of the remaining tenanted houses for the majority of his PhD, until the house was sold in October 2015.

middle-class communities which tend to dominate local primary schools (Robson and Butler, 2001b: 79-84; Butler and Robson, 2003b: 1800-1801; Vincent et al., 2004: 242), extend beyond the age of 11 into local secondary schools. I argue that these local middle-class continuity circuits are likely to be common elsewhere, forming a national pattern of urban middle-class social reproduction. These circuits are most often a historical product of comprehensive school reform, suburban home-ownership (Guratsky, 1982; Lowe, 1997) and the particular educational politics the latter shaped.

6.3 Forging the first link in the chain – colonised middle-class primaries in suburban enclaves

As I outlined in chapter 2, there is a long history of middle-class colonisation of primary schools which predates research examining the role of primary schools in gentrified inner-city areas (Butler and Robson, 2003b; Ball et al., 2004). What is particularly important is the sense of a school *belonging* to the local middle class (Marsden, 1967: 40) and these groups pro-actively using particular primary schools to forge a *local* middle-class circuit of education through to a nearby secondary school. This clear sense of belonging and domination by local middle-class groups is perhaps clearest and easiest to achieve at primary school level when students are more likely to travel shorter distances, catchment areas and school sizes are also generally smaller. These small enclaved areas allow middle class, and in the cases I will discuss it is particularly the white-British middle class, cultural and educational dominance over the local school. This is particularly true for ‘Blossom Hill’ Primary, the largest feeder to Woodtham Park Secondary School and in the Sheffield case ‘Hartknowle’ Primary School.⁷³

‘Blossom Hill’ Primary is located literally over the wall from Woodtham Park Secondary and it forms part of a nexus of middle-class dominated primary schools in Muswell Hill. The Good Schools’ Guide reviews three of these primary schools, two of which, unlike Blossom Hill, are mainly feeder schools for Fortismere. All three of these schools are dominated by a local middle-class intake and at Blossom Hill the tight catchment area of less than 400m means intake is highly localised, creating ‘a strong community feel’ according to the Good Schools’ Guide (2014). All of these schools take advantage of the professional, and sometimes

⁷³ Both primaries are pseudonyms.

celebrity, parents to share their knowledge with children as well as for substantial fundraising efforts. This extends *into* Woodtham Park School, with the PTA dominated by the suburban middle-class parents who live closest to the school (Good Schools Guide, 2014). What has developed in Muswell Hill goes beyond the small 'enclaves' of Inner London gentrifiers in the 2000s, this is a much larger area of middle-class (re-)settlement and social reproduction. This is moving closer to the model of Highgate or Dulwich Village with not just one but at least two local secondary schools which have become amenable to, if not dominated by, the local upper-middle class. The key distinction between Muswell Hill and other areas is that, with the exception of one private preparatory school, these are state-sector schools, making housing key for ensuring access to education. Whilst a minority leave Blossom Hill for private schools or North London grammars, most students leave for Woodtham Park and sixth form students were well aware of the 'racial' and class dynamics this involved:

Rachel: [...] our primary school was really like predominantly white middle-class.

Valeria: Yeah there was like three ethnic people in our entire year, so black, Asian...

[...]

Rachel: But it's really just like a bucket-lift thing, and everyone from Blossom Valley goes to Woodtham Park.

Valeria: Or private schools, that's pretty much it.

(Focus Group One, Woodtham Park School)

This 'bucket-lift' of students literally over the school wall between primary and secondary underlines the strong localism at work here. In contrast to the original emphasis by Ball *et al.* (1995) of spatial mobility defining middle-class circuits of schooling in North London, what is in operation here is a distinctly local circuit revealing a different strategy at work for the local, largely white, middle classes. Whilst spatial mobility to Outer London grammars and certain desirable faith schools remains important in understanding middle-class practices of social reproduction in London, what is being re-created in Muswell Hill and, to a lesser extent, in the gentrified inner London enclaves of Telegraph Hill and some areas of Hackney, are these forms of middle-class social reproduction based on local colonisation of catchment areas around particular schools. Whilst there are important regional specificities which will be examined below, the strategies and patterns associated with these local continuity circuits are national. In the post-grammar school era, the housing market, combined with internal practises of differentiation within schools has ensured that middle-class students are insulated from lower-attaining and often working-class students at each stage of schooling.

In the Sheffield case, a neighbouring primary operates as the largest feeder school to Valley Hills School. 'Hartknowle' primary school accounted for 42% of Valley Hills' intake for the

cohort of students sitting GCSEs in 2007-08 and has a similar role in forging a local middle-class continuity circuit which runs smoothly right through to sixth form for most students. The school itself has become heavily over-subscribed, particularly in recent years with primary schools in the suburban south-west receiving more applicants than places. This is not surprising given its dominant position in providing a very large share of students entering Valley Hills. In a local newspaper interview in 2012, the LEA's chief admissions' officer suggested this trend may be linked to parents who would have previously paid to go private. There is some limited evidence that this trend of using sought-after catchment schools may have increased nationally since the crisis.⁷⁴ As with Blossom Hill, Hartknowle is located adjacent to Valley Hills with an affluent suburban intake. Of the 70 students attending Valley Hills from Hartknowle, at least 50% came from NS-SEC groups 1 and 2, with a further 10% coming from NS-SEC group 3. Another local primary provides 50 students, had an almost identical intake with 60% of students from NS-SEC groups 1-3. Working-class students (NS-SEC 4-7) accounted for only 7% of the Valley Hills' intake though this could well be an underestimate,⁷⁵ and were spread across a range of primary schools where they formed a clear minority, rather than being clustered in a single working-class primary. For reasons that will become clear below, Sheffield's housing market developed in a way which severely limited council housing in the South-West of the city, resulting in working-class residents being concentrated in the North and East of the city. Though Valley Hills technically also has feeder a primary school in a more working-class, ethnically-mixed ward, at least in the data available here, very few students now come from the school serving that ward. Instead ethnic-minority students (35 students in the 2007-08 GCSE cohort) tended to be largely from middle-class or intermediate (NS-SEC 1-3) families with only a handful from working-class backgrounds. This implies a small suburban ethnic-minority middle-class though on a much smaller scale than in London. It is catchment, not feeder school that counts, with the school often rejecting students applying on feeder school criteria alone (See Table 8 p. 209). In practice this means that only the very local, middle-class dominated primary schools *ensure* access to Valley Hills. However, whilst there is clear evidence of local middle-class colonisation of certain primary schools in Sheffield, the housing markets around the primaries mentioned are very different in the provincial as opposed to the metropolitan case.

⁷⁴ Private school student numbers in Sheffield have fallen by 150 since peaking in 2009, dropping from 3.85% to 3.54% of all secondary students. The Good Schools' Guide editor has also described middle-class use of the state sector as having a particular Northern bias (Venning, 2014).

⁷⁵ Just under 10% of Valley Hills' intake were non-classified and an additional 20% of students from the 2007-08 GCSE cohort had no NS-SEC data, as they did not attend university in the 2010-11 or 2011-12. This could lead to the under-reporting of the numbers of working-class students assuming they are less likely to go onto university.

A small number of students, (7 in 2013, 3 in 2014), are successful on appeal and unlike their suburban peers, the contrast in travel times is very obvious. Here two students Richard and Owen who were both successful on appeal, discuss the morning commute with three students who attended local primaries (two to Hartknowle and one to another local suburban primary):

Richard: It's a bit of a trek though innit? [To Owen, who also commutes] So it's pretty much, how much effort are you willing to put in to come to Valley Hills cos' every single morning it's literally get up at like [laughs] quarter to seven, get dressed, have a bit to eat, be out door for half seven or you're late

Owen: It's so much effort

Jessica: Half seven!

Richard: Yeah.

Mary: I get up at 8.

Richard: Well if you wanna be on time, before nine.

Jessica: Oh my god!

Mary: I live across the road.

Alasdair: You get up at 8? I get up at like half 8

All: [laughter]

Alasdair: I get up at ten to nine sometimes

Mary: I think the latest I probably get up is about 25 past 8

Jessica: If I'm gonna come in at a normal time I wake up at about 8 o'clock to get to school, but I come in at like 8 most days to get extra work done, so.

(Focus Group 9, Valley Hills School)

This exchange underlines how the local middle-class circuit works on a daily basis. This taken-for-granted assumption about the ease of getting to school underlines how the smooth transition from primary to secondary to post-16 and out (of Sheffield) into university is also reflected by, and embedded in, an effortless routine. In terms of how this meshes with class differences in this specific case, their parental backgrounds are not so different, most coming from lower-middle/middle-class backgrounds with parents working in the police, hospitality management, teaching or accountancy and with parental HE being primarily in the post-1992 sector or as a mature student. The key difference is place of residence, with being located in the suburban South-West the central factor in smoothing the primary-secondary transition on entry in year 7. It also ensures that journeys to school are distinctly non-problematic, not requiring long commutes involving several buses. For these largely middle-class students there is no 'friction of space' that needs to be negotiated as was the case in Ball *et al.*'s (1995) original London study. Social reproduction through school colonization in an established middle-class suburb in Sheffield, or in a re-established/gentrifying suburb in North London, instead works on a 'neighbourhood school' model. This is a revealing

distortion of the more egalitarian ambitions for comprehensive schools and indicates how processes of selection mutated within a 'comprehensive' system. The commonalities of this socio-spatial pattern of reproduction through a particular local primary school and on to a nearby secondary, reveal how there are normative urban middle-class strategies which traverse metropolitan and provincial urban settings. It also serves to underline the complexity of enclave-making in gentrifying inner London neighbourhoods. Whilst the 'urban-seeking' middle classes are engaged in this process particularly in certain inner London academies – the *local* middle-class circuits that are being produced in places like Telegraph Hill and Muswell Hill bear clear parallels to the older, but persistent, distortion of the comprehensive reform that occurred in middle-class suburbs in places like Sheffield.

6.4 House prices and competition for entry: provincial-metropolitan contrasts at the primary-secondary transition

Despite these broad similarities in how circuits of education are operating in these two suburban case studies, the underlying structural conditions for social reproduction are very different. The two key factors which highlight the metropolitan-provincial urban divide at the primary to secondary transition point in affluent suburban areas are housing costs and the number of applicants. Beneath the similarities in the *de facto* strategies of colonising local primaries close to a sought-after secondary, the stakes are very different.

Muswell Hill has clearly undergone substantial gentrification, with schools playing a key role in driving house prices up. Estate agents are explicit about the role of schooling (Masey, 2010; Venning, 2012) in underpinning local house prices. The area around Woodtham Park represents the extension of this process. We can see how the neighbourhood surrounding Woodtham Park and Blossom Hill School (shown by the postcode sector "N22 7" on Figure 25) has increasingly been drawn into the process of gentrification and house price growth affecting Muswell Hill. The same is true of the streets in N10 2 and N11 2 which are also largely within Woodtham Park's *de facto* catchment. From the mid-1990s there was a clear increase in house prices around the school with N22 7 and N11 2 in particular moving towards the price range of the more select parts of Muswell Hill and away from the less affluent eastern N22 postcodes. Despite these rises, the N2 9 and N10 3 postal sectors have been considerably more expensive throughout the last twenty years. These are the areas which are closest to Fortismere School as well as being close to local woodland and having

a number of larger properties. The Muswell Hill areas (N10 3 and N2 9) which coincide with Fortismere's catchment area remain around £100,000 more expensive than surrounding postcode sectors, but this gap seems to be narrowing with median prices in these districts increasing erratically in contrast to the more steady growth of the other districts. The time lag between parents moving into an area and their children entering the school system means that this closing of the house price gap, if it continues, between the Fortismere and Woodtham Park' neighbourhoods, will only gradually begin to affect the school's intake. However, this dramatic increase in house prices has been exacerbated by the decision to open a new school on the Eastern edge of the N22 7 area closer to N22 5/6/8. These areas of cheaper housing also provided Woodtham Park considerable socio-economic and ethnic diversity in its early years but it now appears likely that the intake will become considerably more affluent (Good Schools Guide, 2014). This was confirmed by sixth form students who noted how younger years seemed 'more Muswell Hilly' (Woodtham Park School, Focus Group 4). The East-West urban and educational divide in the borough of Haringey which these house prices also suggest, parallels the divide seen in the Sheffield case, but the role of house prices is categorically different.

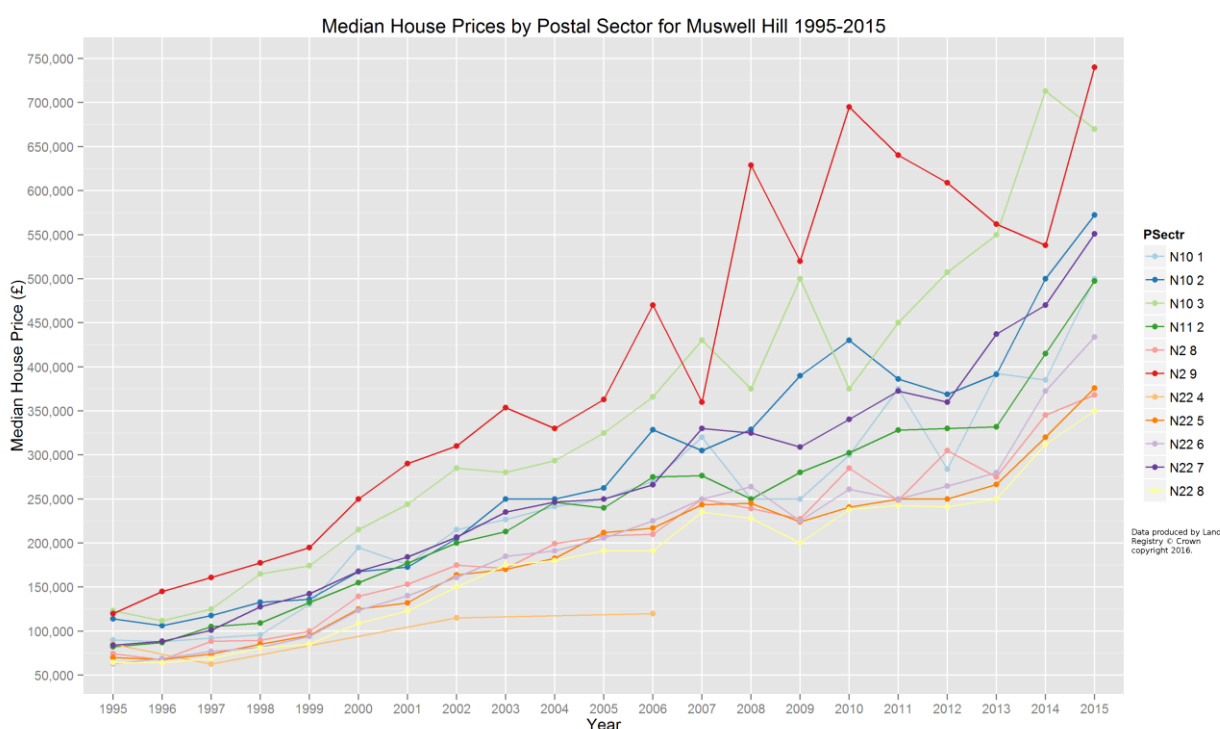


Figure 25 Median House Prices by Postcode Sector for Muswell Hill 1995-2015
Data: (Land Registry, 2016)

Producing a similar graph of postal *districts* surrounding Valley Hills reveals less stark inequalities, and this, to the extent that it is associated with school catchment areas, reflects the fact that suburban middle-class comprehensives in Sheffield recruit over much larger areas than in London. However, plotting the larger postal district areas (Figure 26, p. 20602) reveals the striking divide between the suburban south-west and the rest of the city, with those wealthiest postal districts all focussed in the parliamentary constituency of Sheffield Hallam (S10/11/17/7). This structural social, educational and political division has structured the success of schools like Valley Hills and enabled the particular set of local middle-class circuits described here. These data suggest the close links between house prices and school inequality, questioning the egalitarian legacy of comprehensive school reform in suburban areas (Leech and Campos, 2003). However, whilst these findings and arguments are not new, little attempt has been made in the previous literature to examine how house prices in sought-after catchment areas are linked to regional patterns of class formation and income inequalities. By linking the median house price data to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Office for National Statistics, 2015; Land Registry, 2016), we can estimate the cost and affordability of moving into the catchment areas of Woodtham Park and Valley Hills.

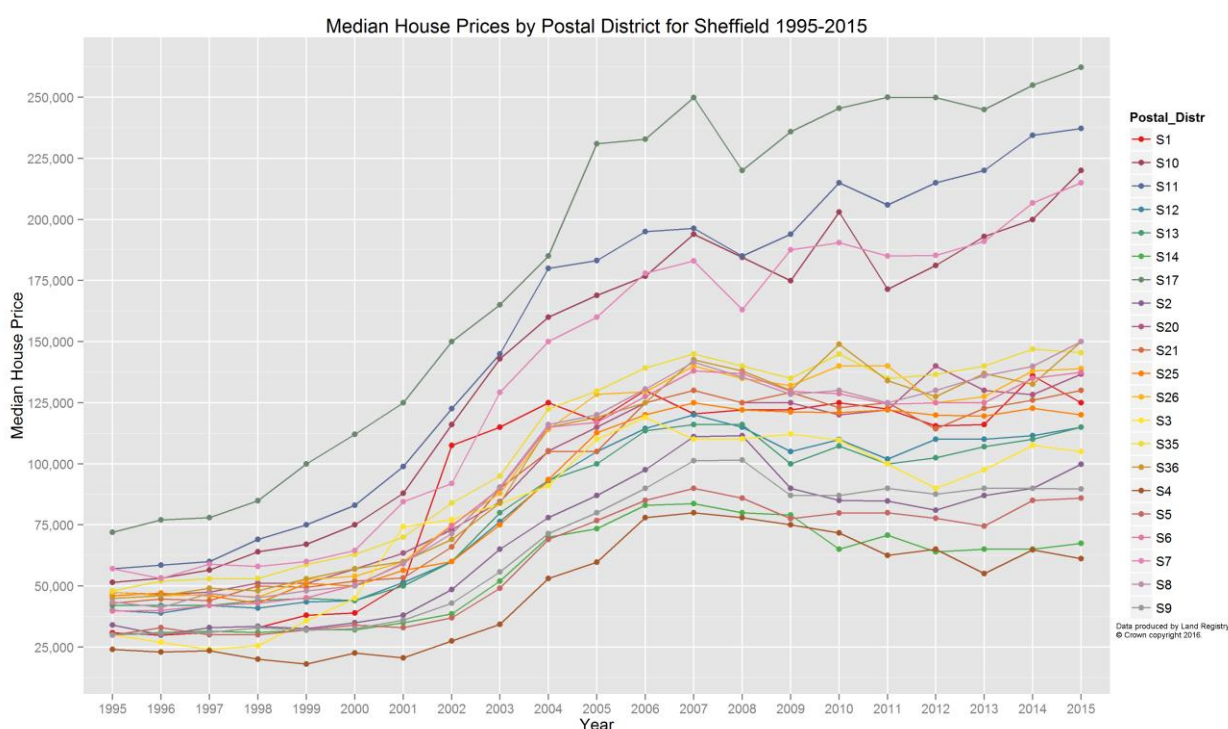


Figure 26 Median House Prices by Postal District for Sheffield 1995-2015
Data: (Land Registry, 2016)

Postal Sector - median house price as a multiple of regional gross annual pay for each group (house price/salary)

<i>Social class (SOC20 Code)</i>	London				Sheffield			
	N2 9	N22 7	N10 3	S10 1	S10 2	S10 3	S10 4	S10 5
<i>Managers, directors and senior officials</i>	13	10	12	5	8	9	8	7
<i>Professional occupations</i>	19	14	17	5	8	9	9	7
<i>Associate professional & technical occupations</i>	21	16	19	6	10	11	11	8
<i>Administrative and secretarial occupations</i>	31	23	28	10	16	18	17	14
<i>Skilled trades occupations</i>	28	21	26	7	11	12	12	9
<i>Caring, leisure & other service occupations</i>	47	35	43	13	21	24	23	18
<i>Sales and customer service occupations</i>	56	41	50	16	25	28	27	22
<i>Process, plant and machine operatives</i>	26	19	23	8	12	14	13	11
<i>Elementary occupations</i>	54	40	49	14	22	25	24	19
<i>Nursing and midwifery professionals</i>	23	17	21	5	8	9	9	7
<i>Teaching and educational professionals</i>	21	16	19	5	8	8	8	6
<i>Median annual pay</i>	24	18	22	8	13	14	14	11

Table 7 Median house price as a multiple of median regional pay in 2014 for selected socio-occupational groups (for postal sectors immediately neighbouring Valley Hills, Woodtham Park and Fortismere School)

Data: (Office for National Statistics, 2015; Land Registry, 2016).

The data shown in Table 7 reveal the stark divisions in affordability of buying into sought-after catchment areas in London as opposed to Sheffield. For a single-earner on the median regional income in each city (for Sheffield this is the regional data for Yorkshire and the

Humber) there is a clear difference in the affordability of buying into the catchment areas. The N22 7 area where Woodtham Park is located, is slightly more affordable than those located closer to Fortismere School (N2 9, N10 3) but the cost is still 18 times the median annual pay for London, compared with a multiple of 14 for the most expensive postal sector in the Valley Hills' catchment. House prices are also considerably more affordable for managerial/professional occupations in the areas near Valley Hills than in Muswell Hill. Moreover, we can also see the relatively differentiated economic position of nursing and teaching, with annual pay in these professions in Sheffield bringing almost as much financial clout on the housing market as for managerial or professional occupations more generally. These two occupational groups are also clearly better-off than those earning the median regional income in stark contrast to London, where they are less well-off than those with median earnings making moving into the catchment of either Fortismere or Woodtham Park unaffordable. The sheer costs of this strategy of middle-class colonisation are drastically greater in a London setting. In turn, this has clear implications for the relative economic capital required to move into the catchment of a suburban comprehensive in provincial cities. This may go some way to explaining the apparently different proclivities towards private schooling in the South versus the North, with some having suggested that the downturn in private school use in the North is linked to instead moving into the catchment area of sought-after schools (Warrell, 2014). Given the prohibitive housing costs associated with accessing London's super-state schools, the issue of *who* will actually be able to afford to attend these schools in future will likely shape patterns of class formation and social reproduction through schooling in London. For lower-paid middle-class occupations, the catchment areas of these schools are already out of reach and if trends in wages and house prices continue there will be serious political implications relating to accessing schools which are arguably just as exclusionary as the private sector. What is visible here is a new dualism in middle-class status in which, ironically traditionally secure welfare-state jobs do not provide the same economic means of social reproduction in London that they do in the North.

These data for median house price as a multiple of annual pay probably underestimate the inequalities in affordability in these two case study areas, as distance to school measures common in London tend to increase house prices at the micro-level. At Valley Hills, catchment area remains the dominant mode for securing admission but students are also successful on the basis of feeder school alone without necessarily living within the catchment area itself (see following page for tables and map referred to here). In stark contrast, Woodtham Park effectively only recruits by distance to school and now has the shortest distance and highest applicant to place ratio of any school the borough. In terms of

intake, the opening of a new secondary school in the more deprived area of Woodtham Park' catchment (Postal sectors "N22 5/6/8" in Figure 25) is likely to exacerbate the ethnic and class divide between Woodtham Park and schools elsewhere in the borough. This suggests how the status of the school may develop in the future as new cohorts work their way through the school. These contrasts are not surprising and reveal the underlining structural differences in the school market in London compared to the rest of the UK. The percentage of students being offered their first preference secondary school is far lower than in most provincial cities, with Birmingham, Manchester and Trafford the only local authorities which have a similar percentage of students being refused their first preferences (Figure 27). Sheffield is closer to Leeds, Newcastle, Gateshead and other smaller provincial cities where between 84.7-91.7% of parents received their first preference school. The London-centric nature of much of the school choice literature perhaps underplayed this important contextual difference. That is not to understate the anxiety and pressures on school choice which exists in smaller provincial cities, but rather underlines how social reproduction through education is a much more fraught site of conflict in London. In the case of Woodtham Park, the huge growth in numbers applying to the school suggests a shift in its status may occur in the future. At present however, Woodtham Park does not form part of the locally and nationally elite sub-field of London's super-state and private schools. Entry to these middle-class suburban schools, forms the second stage in a distinctive set of circuits and the decision to continue on to sixth form will now be examined.

Table 8 Valley Hills application data 2011-2015

<i>Year of entry</i>	<i>Feeder school (places awarded/applicants)</i>	<i>Total refused applicants</i>	<i>Estimated applicants to place ratio</i>
2011	0/27	134	370:246
2012	18/22	69	315:246
2013	0/21	89	325:246
2014	8/22	87	323:246
2015	23/45	102	348:246

<i>Year of entry</i>	<i>Applicants to places ratio</i>	<i>Distance to last place offered (miles)</i>
2013	1431:216	0.85
2014	Missing	0.56

Table 9 Woodtham Park application data 2013-2015

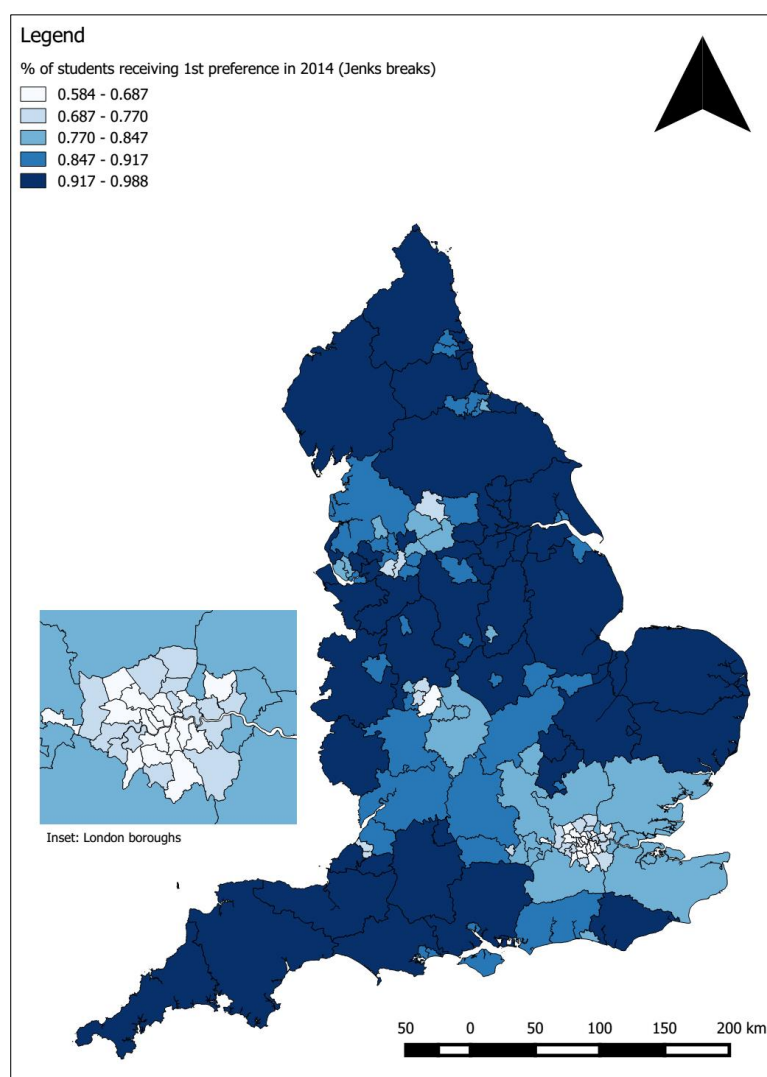


Figure 27 Percentage of students receiving their first preference school for entry in Sept 2014 by local authority area.

Data: (DfE, 2015d)

6.5 “Oh go to sixth form” - that’s just a standard thing’: local middle-class continuity circuits at 16 and 18

In both Woodtham Park and Valley Hills, when students discussed their decision about where to study for post-16, there was a strong sense of studying at sixth form as an automatic choice. This was often combined with a description of the ease of staying on, keeping relationships with teachers and avoiding travel or adjusting to different learning styles. Students from the local middle-class dominated primary schools were also very well-

represented in the sixth form cohorts. At Woodtham Park, the largest single primary school represented at sixth form was Blossom Hill; the 'bucket-lift' continues into sixth form with the majority of students from the neighbouring primary who attend Woodtham Park opting to stay-on into the sixth form. Staying-on forms the next stage of the local middle-class continuity circuit and this fraction of students provide a demographic 'core' for sixth forms in these white, affluent suburban areas. The normative historic construction of the sixth form around 'middle-class' educational values (Reid and Filby, 1982) is arguably a result of middle-class dominance of the sixth form (Kerckhoff et al., 1997). But as we will see below, both schools also reveal that adaptation of the sixth to a broader educational demographic with less family experience of HE, many of whom go on to a post-1992 university, not simply the older barracks of middle-class prestige and recruitment. Nevertheless, in an important and meaningful way, these circuits of education begun at primary level 'feed-up' (Vincent et al., 2004: 237), linking into particular trajectories at 16 and 18, forming continuous and 'insulated' circuits of education within the state sector. These students are the often 'inheritors' of several generations of family experience of university and as such, staying on to sixth form is framed from the perspective of a naturalised choice. In the Sheffield case, was also expressed with a distinct reference to locality and, implicitly, to the specifically classed nature of the local culture.

John: I think the expectation for people that live in this area as well is more that, sixth form's like an almost, "It's going to happen", it's not like you think "Oh I'm not going to go, I might go to college", if you're from this area you sort of think "I'll go to sixth form" then it's "what do I do after sixth form" that's what people think more about. People think "Oh go to sixth form" - that's just a standard thing. [...]

Liam: You can see it from the way people ask questions cos' it's not, "What are you doing at sixth form?" it's "What are you doing at uni?"

(Focus Group 6, Valley Hills School)

Both students came from local and, for Sheffield, secure middle-class families and had attended either Hartknowle Primary or another colonised suburban primary near to Valley Hills. The assumed nature of 6th form, a 'normal biography' (Ball, 2005: 233), underlines how the dominant middle-class presence in the local area over several generations has embedded a normative set of assumptions. Carrying on at post-16 is taken for granted as part of a 'natural' trajectory into HE. In contrast, going to Sheffield College is not even considered, revealing the clear spatial division in trajectories and the implicit association of the sixth form with university. Both students intended to go to university outside of Sheffield, one for musical theatre in London - John, and for dentistry in Liam's case.

However these normative middle-class trajectories of spatial mobility (Holdsworth, 2009; Gamsu, 2012) to attend an established middle-class dominated university are not necessarily representative of the cohort as a whole. Only 25% of the cohort (n=260) attended a non-Sheffield Russell Group university and the largest single destination was Sheffield Hallam receiving 45 students, two thirds of whom were from NS-SEC 1-2 (the University of Sheffield was the second destination with 25 students). These largely white British middle-class students opting to go local had previously attended Valley Hills and Bradfield School,⁷⁶ suggesting a division *within* the middle class between a more outward and nationally-oriented, probably higher-attaining group of students, and a locally-oriented group of middle-class students opting to stay at Sheffield Hallam or the University of Sheffield. Whilst most students did leave Sheffield to study, this was not necessarily to a Russell Group university, and this reflects a key difference to those state schools operating at the top of the local hierarchy in London, where this kind of local, post-1992 destinations are virtually absent. The same pattern is true for all of the suburban state schools in south-west Sheffield, only the city's two private schools do not send large numbers of students to the local Sheffield universities. Unlike in London where elite state schools are dominated by middle-class fractions which is more strongly aligned with the normative trajectory of spatial mobility for university (Holdsworth, 2009: 1855-1856), in Sheffield they are in the minority. Despite the position of schools like Valley Hills and their similar selective practices at a local level, relative to London's 'super-state' schools their HE destinations look starkly different.

A school like Valley Hills and the other suburban state schools, is effectively playing a more complicated institutional role at post-16 than the elite state schools of London. It serves a nationally-mobile, 'cosmopolitan' middle-class group of students from established middle-class backgrounds whilst serving a local middle class desiring or having to stay local and a smaller number of working-class students (at least 10% of the sixth form's intake) a majority of whom will also leave Sheffield to study. There has thus been a degree of 'dilution' of the institutional role of suburban schools in the South-West as conduits to particular university-types since comprehensivization (the data suggests similar patterns at the, now, former grammar schools) which also have close ties to the former-polytechnic universities. Comprehensivisation and the expansion of HE has at least brought a less stratified division between HE destinations in Sheffield than that found in London. The kind of loose 'institutional coupling' (Weick, 1976; Reay et al., 2005) of the suburban comprehensives to Sheffield Hallam is without direct parallel in the elite modularity class schools in London

⁷⁶ A secondary school in the West of the city with a socio-economically mixed rural/urban intake.

revealed by the network analysis in chapter four. In fact the all the state schools in Sheffield's elite suburban sub-field of institutions shares the HE destinations profile of Valley Hills, underlining the differentiated relative nature of school hierarchies in provincial cities like Sheffield. In London's elite schools those attending post-1992 universities are spread out to a range of universities, form a distinct minority and presumably represent a small number of lower-attaining students.

There is thus a distinctive middle-class localism at work in a school like Valley Hills which is absent from its hierarchical equivalents in a London setting. Valley Hills sends a larger proportion of its students on to Russell Group (32%) and post-1992 (38%) universities than Woodtham Park (15% Russell Group, 39% Post-1992). Its closest parallel within the sub-field of London's elite state schools is probably Ashmole School,⁷⁷ a modularity class one school, which sent 28% of its cohort to post-1992 universities and 31% to the Russell Group. Around half (15) of the students who were attending post-1992 institutions were attending local London universities but they were not clustered in a single institution and nor were they particularly middle-class (NS-SEC 1-2). The position of Valley Hills thus does not have a direct metropolitan parallel, though arguably the profile of HE destinations for Ashmole School comes close. This is almost certainly a result of how post-16 expansion coincided with the expansion of both Sheffield Polytechnic/Hallam and the University of Sheffield. This is particularly true in the North of the city where the FE College campuses have been concentrated but it remains true of the former grammars in the South West which always sent substantial numbers of students to local teacher training colleges and the University of Sheffield. To return to John and Liam's original exchange, the association of sixth form with university and the exclusion of FE College from any sort of consideration for students from local suburban, well-established middle class families is important. Their explicit linking of this to locality matters as it underlines a key structural dynamic in inequalities between different post-16 institutions across the city of Sheffield which will be examined in the following section.

⁷⁷ The similarities extend beyond the profile of HE destinations. Ashmole was also a secondary modern in a suburban neighbourhood which has built up a considerable reputation and now has tight distance requirements for entry.

6.6 'It is impossible to understand properly the educational facilities in Sheffield without knowing something of the geography of the town.'⁷⁸ - Institutional hierarchy in a provincial city

The specific nature of the provincial local hierarchy of schools and how middle-class advantage operates in Sheffield, has its own particular history. Whilst the local-level strategies of primary school colonisation and smooth entry to the sixth form are common across metropolitan and provincial urban contexts, the specific urban history of educational advantage in smaller provincial cities is different. The distance from the large nexus of schools for the elite and metropolitan upper-middle class that cluster on London and the South-East create a different institutional hierarchy. The absence of gentrification as a force affecting school intakes as it has in London (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Butler et al., 2013), and the relative fixity of classed residential boundaries between different neighbourhoods means the radical transformations of London schools' catchment areas are not replicated. Moreover, the coincidence of comprehensive school reform with continued suburban in-filling has in the long-term acted to cement inequalities and distort the egalitarian aims of comprehensive reform. Whilst the residential and educational practices entailed in middle-class enclaves and local continuity circuits of education are similar across Valley Hills and Woodtham Park schools, the institutional status attached to these patterns is clearly not. In this section, the specific history of the geography of the state-school hierarchy in Sheffield will be examined in relation to Valley Hills, focussing in particular on how the sixth form became a key element of local institutional distinction. This section seeks to highlight how local middle-class continuity circuits are not merely the result of collective patterns of individual decision-making, but are the result of struggle over urban and educational spaces within which the sixth form has increasingly become central.

The divided urban-educational history of Sheffield's state schools on a deeper level reflects the regional hierarchy of state schooling within which they are situated. The schools of the south-western suburbs may serve as conduits for the spatial and educational mobility of certain middle-class fractions and upwardly mobile working-class students into nationally elite universities, but this as we have seen, is not their only function. They are institutions in which working-class students are more likely to access Russell Group universities than in

⁷⁸ (Bryce Commission, 1895: 165)

the city's other schools, though their middle-class peers are still more likely than them to attend Russell Group institutions. This sub-section explains the history of a locally elite set of institutions in Sheffield which have always dominated and shaped the city's circuits of education, whilst never playing a national role either as a *de facto* elite Oxbridge 'feeder school' of the South-East, or as a London 'super-state' school in which Russell Group attendance is the overwhelming norm. Common patterns of social reproduction associated with the urban middle class since the end of grammar schooling, position schools differently in the local hierarchy of schooling as a result of their geographical proximity to nationally elite sets of institutions. The historical concentration of England's infrastructure for elite social reproduction on London and the South-East in effect relativizes the meaning of elite status at a local level.

The institutional hierarchy of which Valley Hills forms a newer member, has its roots in the historical geography of schooling and class within the city. In the Sheffield context, these local middle-class continuity circuits represent the latest adaptation and mutation of a long-maintained institutional hierarchy; schooling has never been separate from the class geography of Sheffield, it has always been integral to it. Sheffield's geographical polarisation began in the mid-19th century as the middle class began to move out of the industrialising old Georgian centre and into new suburban estates to the West. Broomhill saw some of the first development with the Broomhall Estate, a gated enclave including two boys' grammar schools, being built from the 1840s (Binfield, 1993; Hey, 1998; Marchant et al., 2008: 621-623). This clustering of schools for the middle-class continued, with several private preparatory schools (three of which remain open) and the Sheffield Girls' High School being built before 1900. This was followed by Notre Dame High School, the major Catholic grammar, re-locating from the city centre to the former Broomhill mansion of Mark Firth, the steel magnate, in 1919. Broomhill remains Sheffield's 'education alley' for middle-class parents (Good Schools Guide, 2014) which also includes a former boys' private preparatory school that began offering secondary education from the 1970s.⁷⁹ This dense concentration of institutions, most of which were founded soon after Sheffield's suburbs sprang up in the late 19th and early 20th century, form the central hub of a slightly broader geographical network of suburban schools in the South-West. By 1958, four other grammar schools opened in the city's other south-western suburbs, as well as the city's two technical schools (Ball, 1971). In contrast the North and East of the city had only three grammar schools

⁷⁹ Birkdale School was originally a boys' preparatory school, with students attending King Edwards and other city grammars as well as private schools further afield. It began to offer secondary education in the 1970s after King Edwards ceased to be a boys' grammar school.

despite a much larger, but primarily working-class population. The contemporary position in the local field of post-16 of the southwestern schools is the result of several periods of conflict over schooling which saw them maintain and entrench their positions of prestige that were already becoming established in the late Victorian period. These conflicts were given clear spatial form by the segregated development of the city's housing.

Sheffield's suburban expansion in the twentieth century saw the city's educational divide develop further. Speculative, largely private-sector building for owner-occupation continued through the inter-war period and into the 1970s, with much of the housing near Valley Hills a result of this inter- and post-war suburban infilling. This housing development created the conditions for secondary modern schools of Valley Hills' ilk, which served affluent catchments and saw greater numbers of students sitting the GCE and staying on until 16 than elsewhere (For a study focussing specifically on Sheffield examples of this, see: Carter, 1962: 60-62). Another key element in creating the largely middle-class intakes which Valley Hills currently enjoys was the general absence of municipal housing in this part of the city. The direction of travel which saw the large inter- and post-war council estates built in the North and East of the city and not in the South-West (Womersley, 1962), was set very early on. Wishing to alleviate housing pressure and poor conditions in central Sheffield the council's working-class housing committee purchased land in High Storrs in the south-west of the city in 1900 (Gaskell, 1976: 190-191). The proposal to build workmen's housing on the land led to fierce opposition from local residents and Conservative local politicians. Not only did this effectively discourage the council from further efforts to develop municipal housing in the South-West on a grand scale, but the grounds were then used first as sports grounds for High Storrs Grammar school and then for the school itself which re-located to the suburbs in 1933 (High Storrs School, 2011). School building was thus woven in to the very process of classed residential division which it in turn profited from.

This geographical division of the city by social class was to prove crucial in the political conflict that broke out over comprehensivisation. The move towards a comprehensive system began in 1962 with the voting through of a comprehensive plan by the council's Education Committee (Ball, 1971: 74). This represented the victory of local NUT teachers and members of the local branch of the Socialist Educational Association along with younger councillors, who had faced down opposition from older Labour councillors, many of whom were themselves Old Edwardians, alumnae of the prestigious local boys' grammar King

Edward VII (Hampton, 1970: 233-244; Cornwell, 2005: 285-301). The plan began with the North and then East of the city where there were only three grammars, leaving the grammars of the South-West until last. Whilst there was opposition from suburban middle-class parents who formed the 'Sheffield Parents Association for State Education' to resist the abolition of the city's grammars, students of King Edward VII wrote a letter to the local newspaper supporting the plans (Unknown, 1965). When the Conservatives won an unprecedented and short-lived majority on the council in 1968, the comprehensive plan was maintained and not over-turned, as even in the middle-class Tory heartlands of the South-West the majority of children were still in secondary modern schools (Cornwell, 2009: 10).

Despite this apparent victory for progressive politics, the issue had revealed the clear fracture lines of the city's urban educational politics, with certain fractions of the partly Conservative suburban South-West pitted against the Labour council elected primarily by the working-class North and East. This tension was not new however, with tensions between the interests of suburban schools of the South-West and the council effectively dating back to the council's first interventions in secondary education (Smith, 1982b: 211-224). At the time of the comprehensive reform, there was awareness that this could exacerbate inequalities relating to the residential segregation of the city. As a result the suburban comprehensives of the South-West were given catchment areas which included feeder primary schools located in working-class and ethnically-mixed wards, these efforts however, were not to prove sufficient. Ball's (1971: 75-76) contemporary analysis revealed the key area of future political tension over the city's unequal geography of education:

At the moment only thirteen out of the thirty one comprehensive schools have 6th forms. They are arranged so that three or four schools form one "group", one of which will have a 6th form for the group. Generally the ex-grammar schools have the sixth forms and the ex-moderns run only to sixteen.

[...]

Some of the Comprehensive schools have sixth forms and "there is no doubt" to quote Mr. G. M. A. Harrison, Sheffield's Chief Officer "these schools still have greater prestige than those without... the other schools will need time to demonstrate their quality".'

It is exactly this fissure over sixth form prestige and size which was never overcome. The concerns of Ball and Harrison had a specific social geography to them with the sixth forms of the South-West, particularly King Edwards and High Storrs as well as the technical school, King Ecbert's (in the deep South of the city in Totley-Dore, the wealthiest of the city's suburbs) retaining their position. In fact, in a sense the situation in effect became more polarised and more divided with Valley Hills and Silverdale, two suburban secondary

moderns, both opening large, successful sixth forms in the mid-1970s (Cornwell, 2009: 17). This form of institutional mimicry was undoubtedly an attempt to emulate the scholastic reputation of the local grammar schools (Veblen, 2007: 240). Just as King Henry's Grammar spent much of its first period as a grammar school attempting to assert its public school status, Valley Hills and the other suburban secondary moderns of Sheffield Hallam adopted a similar strategy of emulation of the local grammars. The earlier dissatisfaction of suburban middle-class parents when they found their children in secondary moderns like Valley Hills and the already academic inclinations of these schools (Carter, 1962: 60-62), reveals the social basis for the establishment of the two new school sixth forms in the suburban South-West. Their success underlined how the extension of middle-class suburban development in Sheffield Hallam after 1945 had further entrenched the dichotomous division of urban and educational space in the city. The two new sixth forms key sites of social reproduction for this extended suburban middle-class area.

As well as being sites of social reproduction which would come to entrench particular suburban circuits of education, these schools were also key sites of political struggle:

Once again, 'geography' is not just a product of social relations; it is an integral part of their development. Lipietz (1977: 90) writes: 'La structuration de l'espace est la dimension spatiale des rapports sociaux, et, ceux-ci étant luttes de classes, la structuration de l'espace est luttes de classes, non seulement en ce sens qu'elle en est le produit, mais en ce qu'elle en est un enjeu et même un moyen'

(Massey, 1995: 120)

It was Silverdale School which became the focus of political opposition to the Labour council's attempt to push for a full tertiary FE College reorganisation of post-16 education in the city (Cornwell, 2005: 375-376). The plan would have seen the city abolish the sixth forms across the city's schools and replaced with campuses of an enlarged FE College for the whole city. This was designed in part to respond to falling rolls across the city, but also to the very low numbers of students in certain comprehensive sixth forms in the North and East of the city. Whilst school governors in other suburban schools fell into line, at Silverdale, situated in a Conservative voting council ward, there was whole-hearted opposition to the plan from parents, governors and teachers. Local Conservative councillors and the Conservative MP then lobbied the Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Baker, who preserved the sixth forms in the suburban Hallam constituency (Cornwell, 2005: 371-379). For the Labour council this meant the FE College system was only implemented in the less affluent North and East of the city. This political struggle effectively decided the structure of post-16 for the following decades and though considerable changes have occurred since, it

acted to preserve the prestige of the suburban sixth forms. Kerckhoff *et al.* (1997: 30) argued that 'the presence or absence of a sixth form paralleled the structural features of grammar and secondary modern schools in the selective system'. Whilst the geographical clarity of the class conflict is specific to Sheffield, the role of the sixth form more broadly was noted as central to how class inequalities were effectively maintained through the school system after comprehensivization. Already in the mid-1970s, if middle-class students were in comprehensive schools as opposed to the remaining grammars, they were far more likely to be in schools with sixth forms than those without (Kerckhoff *et al.*, 1997: 28-29). This crystallised along very sharp geographical boundaries in Sheffield because of the educational politics which stemmed from stark divisions in the local housing market.

In Sheffield, the segregating effect of comprehensive catchment areas was exacerbated by the decision over sixth forms, and as competition has become more spatially restrictive on entry at 11, competition for access to the sixth form has also increased. The former assistant head of sixth form at Valley Hills who retired in the early 2010s, discussed the situation at Valley Hills when she first arrived in the early 1990s:

Sol: Did a lot of people stay on?

Julie: Loads of people did, they were *desperate*, to stay on, and they were desperate to do A-levels. When I first went there, there was another course, I can't remember what it was called, a sort of transition where you could do some re-sits and do some other courses and then hopefully get a platform to go on and do A-levels. But there would only be about ten of those.

Sol: And was that still the case when you left?

Julie: No that got abandoned a long time ago. We did start doing those, I can't remember what you call them [...] like vocational A-levels. [...] I think they still do it at King Edwards but it didn't last so, it's not a comprehensive sixth form at Valley Hills, and it's become less and less comprehensive because it's increasingly... well by the time I left, the five C's had largely gone and to do music you needed an A, to do science you needed at least a B, to do maths you needed at least a B, whereas at the College it's still the five C's. So it is a sort of selection really. Well, definitely.

S: And has that happened because the sixth form has more say over, if not the admissions policy then who can come in on grades?

Julie: Yeah, I think it's happened because everything's driven by inspection. And you want your A-level results to be as good as possible and therefore increasingly you take in students who are likely to get good A-level results. So it's not about education, it's not about giving people a chance.

Julie: [...] we'd get ridiculous scenarios, you know when it was first-come, first-served. We'd have a sixth form open evening, it would be jam packed, people would get the forms, fill them in and hand them in all at once! Or they'd turn up the next morning before the school opened... It was a horrible process.

S: People were desperate to get in?

J: Yeah *really* desperate.

(Julie, former assistant head of sixth form Valley Hills School. Original emphasis.)

This gradual move to increase levels of attainment required to access the school's sixth form and remove the possibility of re-sitting GCSE's within the school show how Valley Hills steadily reinforced its reputation and position as an academic sixth form. Moreover, what was in effect being undermined was the value of the comprehensive school reform itself. Not only was there *de facto* residential segregation on entry at 11, but the school gradually increased the selection criteria for entry at 16 and removed vocational options. These changes and the earlier sixth form conflict they rested on, paved the way for the local ascendancy of Valley Hills, particularly at sixth form level. In terms of circuits of education, it created the conditions for the local middle-class continuity circuits. Moreover, the changes that occurred at Valley Hills, the middle-class suburban development, a smooth transition from suburban secondary modern to a comprehensive with an academic bent, the gradual build-up of the sixth form and the intensification of housing market inequalities and concurrent access pressures at 11 and 16 – these patterns have been common nationally, indicating a key socio-spatial pattern of middle-class social reproduction since the end of the grammar school system in most areas.

Whilst this undoubtedly represents a distortion of the egalitarian hopes for comprehensive school reform, geographical distinctions have to be drawn as to the implications of these changes. The schools of Sheffield Hallam, the city's southwestern suburbs, represent an extremely polarised geographical hierarchy, but the process of maintaining, re-creating or subtly transforming the local hierarchy through comprehensive reform is paralleled in other provincial cities. There is plentiful evidence of this in the Midlands, with the Solihull case perhaps the clearest parallel (Walford and Jones, 1986), though many examples of single or smaller numbers of schools are evident in other cities (e.g. Roundhay School in Leeds). However, what is important to underline is the relative meaning of these struggles over institutional hierarchy at a local level. In the Sheffield case, Valley Hills' forms part of a cluster of schools, both state and private which dominate the local hierarchy. Student perceptions of the overlap between geographical and educational hierarchies were quite clear:

Sara: Yeah, all't best schools are round the same area.

Sophie: Yeah.

Sol: Whereabouts?

Sara: They're like near Dore and things like Silverdale, they're all them kind of schools, they're all near like't same area they're near each other and then all the other ones are like separated in't other [part], rest of Sheffield.

[...]

Sol: I spoke to one guy who'd been at Forge Valley⁸⁰ and he'd gone to Valley Hills and he was kind of shocked by the differences in attitudes towards money and like, the size of people's houses and stuff like that at Valley Hills. Do you think...

Sara: Probably cos' a lot of people who go to Valley Hills are from that area and like the few that come from over our end, they'll be quite shocked [...].

Keeley: Like Broomhill and that, they're massive houses aren't they?

Sophie: Yeah.

(Focus Group 3. Sheffield College, 'Seaton' campus)

These differences were keenly felt by students. Despite the strength of these sentiments, the schools of South-West Sheffield, with the possible exception of the private Girls' High School, are not on an even pegging with the 'super-state' schools of London. Even excluding London's grammars like Henrietta Barnet or King Henry's, CSG and Fortismere are still radically different in their status when judged on HE destinations. Both of the latter have a much larger proportion of their students attending Russell Group institutions and far fewer attending London's local post-1992 institutions than Valley Hills. As I argued above, students following a normative 'cosmopolitan', white middle-class trajectory of studying away from home for university form a minority of students in the suburban sixth forms. Relative to Longley Park Sixth Form College or students at the Sheffield College campuses these students are a much larger group, but they are still very distant from schools within the metropolitan 'super-state' and private sub-field suggested by the London analysis. This higher level at which certain 'comprehensive' state schools operate in London also relativizes the effects of the history of urban middle-class interventions which have stimulated Valley Hills local ascendancy. For Woodtham Park, where similar middle-class continuity circuits have developed, the school does not serve as a major conduit to elite universities which would make it a locally elite school in a London setting. The sub-fields or communities of schools and universities suggested in chapter four indicate the relative differences in what it takes to qualify as 'elite' at a local level.

⁸⁰ A school in the West of the city with a significant white working-class intake.

6.7 Conclusion –between national patterns of the urban middle-class and provincial forms of institutional hierarchy and reproduction

This chapter has sought to examine the complex spatial patterning of social reproduction associated with the urban middle class in and outside of the capital. Viewed at the meso city-level to the ‘micro’-level of the school and neighbourhood, there is little difference between provincial and metropolitan strategies of primary school colonisation, strategic use of the housing market and catchment areas and the smooth transition to sixth form. These urban strategies of *de facto* educational exclusion and domination of local institutions have always been present in some form since the expansion of the education system coincided with the building of segregated cities in the late 19th century. These local continuity circuits which provide a set of smooth transitions at 11, 16 and 18 for the *local* urban middle class in suburban areas, have their historical roots in the inter-twining of comprehensive school reform with the post-war expansion of home-ownership. Comprehensive school reform in the 1960s and 1970s coincided with very high rates of home-ownership amongst the middle classes nationally, embedding these forms of unequal catchment area access (Guratsky, 1982; Lowe, 1997; Leech and Campos, 2003). However, whilst these national patterns of the 1970s and 1980s have continued, the personal wealth and/or combined annual earnings required to use this route are categorically different in London compared to Sheffield. Schools in London where access is effectively determined by distance from home to school are completely different in terms of their affordability compared to those in cities like Sheffield. Not only are the numbers of applicants and the distance criteria more extreme in London, but house prices are creating conditions which will price out certain middle-class occupations unless individuals have other sources of wealth to draw on. This, as I argued above, could have serious political ramifications for the intake of these schools if prices continue to rise. Prices would have to fall substantially (or wages increase dramatically) to counter-act this threat of growing school segregation by class. Moreover, it does suggest a possible regional dualism of the middle classes, with clearly demarcated differences in the relative economic position of teachers and nurses who are considerably better off on the Sheffield housing market.

All of this reveals the distinctiveness of the field of schooling in London. The conflict over access to particular schools has a particularly frenzied and economically polarised nature

which is simply not replicated on the same scale in smaller provincial cities. The rapid pace of house price change and the dramatic growth of applicants to a new school like Woodtham Park, is not found in Sheffield where the development of new forms of institutional hierarchy has tended to be slower and built out of the earlier concentration of grammar schools in the suburban south-west. In the final section of this chapter, I sought to show how circuits of education are not merely the result of collective patterns of individual choice, but are actively constructed by moments of urban conflict which determine the socio-spatial shape and the institutional form of social reproduction for the following decades. The decision over the city's sixth forms in the late 1980s bears parallel with the retention of grammar schools in many of Outer London boroughs. Though this occurred on a much larger scale, the key dynamic was the meshing of a particular set of suburban middle-class formations with Conservative local (and/or national) political control to resist alternative models of schooling (Young and Kramer, 1978; Gamsu, 2015b). This preservation of modes of education more closely aligned to the historical models of the public school, as shown in the case of King Henry's Grammar, may initially seem to have occurred in Sheffield too over the sixth forms. However, what has evolved in Sheffield is a more subtly differentiated hierarchy of schooling which reveals the relative position of state schools which are 'locally elite' in a Sheffield setting but do not share the same profile of HE destinations as London's 'super-state' schools.

The large number of students attending post-1992 universities, and particularly Sheffield Hallam, throws light on the relative position of schools like Valley Hills nationally, as well as underlining its complex role locally. If the hyper-selective academic sixth form, found particularly in certain private and super-state schools in the South-East has effectively been defined by sending ever larger numbers of students to an elite sub-set of Russell Group universities, neither Valley Hills nor the other state schools of the suburban south-west really fulfil this remit. Woodtham Park, equally, does not make the grade, though it may do in future. What is different in the Sheffield setting is the strength of the links between local universities and these suburban sixth forms. In particular it is the links to the post-1992 sector and Sheffield Hallam especially which underline a different institutional role for these locally 'elite' suburban schools. The profile of students attending Sheffield Hallam also suggests a further dualism within the middle classes nationally, with the significant presence of 'middle-class locals' opting or being forced to study in the post-1992 sector not evident to the same extent in London especially in the regional (and national) sub-set of elite schools. When we think about middle-class educational trajectories, this is not the type of outcome that is normatively assumed, with the spatial trajectory away from home to study at a historic

university the 'traditional' model (Patiniotis and Holdsworth, 2005; Holdsworth, 2009). This flags up distinctions in patterns of university choice within the Sheffield's middle classes between a more cosmopolitan high-attaining suburban core of normative middle-class spatial mobility for university and a newer middle-class from less prestigious suburban areas happier to stay local. Whilst the schools of South-West Sheffield celebrate getting a few students to Oxbridge, in truth most of their sixth form students will attend a post-1992 institution. Despite their increasingly selective post-16 entry measures over the course of the 1990s, the HE destinations of Valley Hills are far more balanced and 'comprehensive' than the majority of the elite sub-field of schools in London.

Sheffield's internal divisions between schools and neighbourhoods are sharp and clearly geographically delineated. However, this institutional hierarchy and the distinctive circuits of education formed through the combination of institutional field and the social divisions of urban space are not as polarised as the field of education in London. There is no subset of super-state schools which compete on a par with the private sector and moreover, any presence of a national or international elite class is miniscule if not completely absent. In terms of schools, it might be argued that this is not true of all provincial cities; Sheffield does not have an Oxbridge feeder school, private or state, that can compete with the elite schools of the South-East in the way that Manchester Grammar or the Birmingham King Edwards Grammars try to, nor does it have a large private sector in the way that York or Bristol do (though in this it is representative of most provincial cities). The development of these school systems has to be seen historically at both a local scale, allowing us to examine how particular patterns of urban politics developed around education as seen above, and regionally. This regional historical lens has to set an understanding of contemporary hierarchies of schooling within an understanding of why elite forms of schooling did not develop in the North of England on anything like the scale seen in the South-East.

7. Conclusion: Towards a historical geography of educational power

Taken at its broadest, what this thesis has revealed is that the way in which elites and the broader, and socially and ethnically diverse, 'middle classes' are being educated is changing. This process is regressive, preserving elite educational cultures and the fundamental geographical division within the English field of schooling between London/the South-East and the rest of the country. Nationally, the spatial analysis of the field of schooling which I set as my first research question and formed the focus of chapter four, revealed the continuing skew of elite forms of schooling towards London and the South-East of England, with elite Oxbridge 'feeder' schools concentrated in the South-East of England and generally absent from the North. The historical south-eastern bias of elite private schools has certainly been strengthened since the crisis and the circuits of power, collective trajectories of social reproduction, running through these schools, onto Oxbridge, Bristol and the London universities and, presumably,⁸¹ back to the centres of elite employment in the capital remain potent. Within this nexus of educational power, the rise of a new sub-set of 'super-state' schools presents a challenge to certain less high-attaining or prestigious private schools but also poses major questions about the polarisation of state education in London. My examination of these super-state schools in chapter five, revealed how they had deliberately built-up their position over thirty years, effectively creating a distinct layer of elite state schools with greater interaction with the private sector than other state schools. The re-creation of a culturally regressive, traditional and 'gentlemanly' grammar school with a rigorous academic discipline at King Henry's was producing a new suburban British-Indian middle-class circuit of education. KHS serves as a conduit to an elite sub-set of Russell Group universities with strong links to Oxbridge. Within the sub-field of elite schools suggested by the modularity analysis of chapter four, CSG portrayed the contrasting institutional cultures and field positions of these elite state schools, underlining the scope for a more ambitious analysis of the local urban geography of these elite state schools across the capital and beyond.

⁸¹ As I note above and as I return to below, the idea of circuits of power extending from school to university and into employment associated with the reproduction of a south-eastern elite is not without evidence (see footnote page 114) but it is not the empirical focus of this thesis.

The absence of these elite state schools from a provincial city like Sheffield speaks to the fundamental divisions in the class structure between a third tier provincial city and London's global metropole. Regional divisions in private school participation and the demographic intake of the private sector further underline the historical dualism between the middle classes of the South-East of England and the rest of the country. Free school conversions of private schools are in part a response to financial weakness within the middle classes across Northern England and parts of the Midlands. London's cauldron of pressures around housing and social reproduction threatens to push even 'traditional' lower middle-class professionals out of the catchment of the most sought-after comprehensives, highlighting the potential for major fractures and conflicts over state education in the future. In contrast, buying into the catchment of a suburban comprehensive in a city like Sheffield remains relatively affordable for teachers, nurses and other public sector professionals. Chapter five revealed the shared practices of middle-class colonisation and continuity circuits in suburban schools in the capital and in Sheffield, as well as contrasting the costs of buying into this form of schooling and middle-class social reproduction. Creating a stable enclave with schooling at its centre is a much older practice of the urban middle classes than has previously been acknowledged, which underlines the centrality of a historical analysis. This pattern is also present in Sheffield though in a field of schooling which is distinctly less polarised where *elite* state schools are absent and particular middle-class fractions opt to stay local for university.

Within sociology and geography of education a major contribution of this thesis is to provide a historical perspective on current spatial patterns of schooling. My aim has been to write a historical geography of *contemporary* educational power, situating students' experiences, their trajectories and the circuits they form within a broader historical sociology and geography of schooling and the city. This historical lens underlined the continuing legacy of forms of dualism within social structure, economy and cultural life which have divided London and the provincial cities from the late 19th century (Robson, 1986). Taking this long view allows us to see how the elite south-eastern nexus of educational power incorporating London and Oxbridge universities and the ancient public schools has shifted, with the modularity analysis for London highlighting the position of elite state schools within this constellation of institutional cultural, social and economic power. However, it also reveals the long-term persistence and mutation of socio-spatial strategies towards education. Strategies of residential enclaving amongst the urban middle class have long prioritised exclusive forms of educational provision within the neighbourhood forming the middle-class enclave. This has been in evidence since at least the 1970s (Gunn and Bell, 2011: 183-184) in something close to the arguably dominant national form of the comprehensive in a relatively affluent

suburb, but with strategies of colonisation of schools going back to the tripartite era if not earlier. This long-term historical lens has been largely absent from the resurgent literature on the geography of education over the last decade (Butler and Hamnett, 2007; Holloway et al., 2010; Holloway et al., 2011; McCreary et al., 2013). It is thus a renewal of several approaches to urban education and in particular recalls the words of Bill Marsden (1987: 2), 'it is necessary to place schooling in a trinity of contexts: of time, of place and of society.' To do this with a critical, theoretically transposed Bourdieusian approach is my object here.

This chapter first provides a discussion of the key findings of this research, describing how they contribute to existing literatures (parts 7.1-7.5). The chapter concludes by describing possible avenues for future research (part 7.6) followed by a short concluding section (7.7). Before that, I highlight five areas where this thesis contributes to the existing literature. Firstly (7.1) I argue that a major contribution of this thesis is in providing a historical context to the sociological and geographical analysis of educational power, by situating a spatial analysis of the contemporary field of education within the intertwined histories of middle-class and elite education and regional inequality. This feeds secondly (7.2) into a broader discussion of how London's field of schooling reveals evidence of a 'new urban elitism', with the city's super-state schools representing new patterns of social reproduction which are specific to the particular pressures and forms of urban change in the capital. I then thirdly (7.3) outline this in greater depth, drawing on the case studies of these elite state schools, underlining how the past forty years has led to the deep polarisation of London's school system on a scale not seen elsewhere. I also underline the specific policy implications of this process for London's school system, contrasting these findings with literature which has focussed on the success of London's state schools in improving the attainment of students on Free School Meals (Wyness, 2011; Cook, 2013). Fourthly (7.4), this has contributed to the retention and deepening of the south-eastern nexus of elite educational institutions. This nexus is central to understanding the field of power within England, with the constellation of elite south-eastern feeder schools examined here first feeding into the 'golden triangle' of elite universities in London and Oxbridge (Wakeling and Savage, 2015a). The graduates of these universities often return to (or remain in) the capital (Fielding, 1993: 133) (re-)creating new micro-geographies of the elite (Cunningham and Savage, 2015), thus creating hypothetical circuits of power. Finally (7.5) I contrast this to the institutional hierarchies seen in Sheffield as a third tier provincial city, where 'conventional' strategies of buying into the catchment of suburban schools are still the dominant mode of middle-class reproduction, highlighting the distinctiveness of provincial middle-class circuits of education. I also argue

that the stable middle-class enclaves around particular primary and secondary schools, traditionally in suburban areas but increasingly in the gentrified central areas in London too, form a national pattern with an associated set of local middle-class ‘continuity’ circuits.

These regional divisions are in some ways a continuation of old arguments and debates around the dualism of class relations and economic and cultural structures in England and the UK more broadly (Rubinstein, 1987a; Cain and Hopkins, 1987; Martin, 1988), and how this affects and is affected by an education system with clear regional biases (Bradford and Burdett, 1990; Hoare, 1991). I return to how elite and middle-class education are central in shaping these structural divisions in the cultural and political economy of England in the next section. However, the findings presented here also suggest new fracture lines and divisions in keeping with new analyses of the geography of social class in the twenty first century (Savage, 2015b; Wakeling and Savage, 2015a). In educational and urban terms, these changes in class structure and identity have been underpinned by changes which, as is the case at King Henry’s Grammar, sometimes appear as a form of culturally ‘regressive modernisation’ (Hall, 1987: 17) with a return to old values and models of schooling (Ball, 2012). In some ways the establishment of stable enclaves of inner London gentrifiers around particular primary and secondary schools⁸² also represent a regressive move, re-creating, as I have argued above, the conditions of the suburban comprehensives discussed in chapter six.

7.1. Theoretical contributions: towards a historical sociology and geography of educational power

There has been little prior research which has attempted to combine empirical research examining contemporary circuits of education in *both* metropolitan and provincial urban settings. Previously there had been work analysing how school systems in provincial cities were being affected by urban change and specifically how schooling was negotiated and manipulated by the provincial urban middle classes (Savage et al., 2005; Bridge, 2006a;

⁸² It is worth qualifying that gentrification has contributed to driving changes in these particular schools in both *de facto* selection and exclusion on entry through the housing market (Butler et al., 2013), but also in terms of processes of segregation and discrimination within the schools in question (Kulz, 2013). These changes to the schools have in turn made these areas more attractive to middle-class families, reinforcing processes of gentrification and entrenching the middle-class presence within the schools in question.

Bridge, 2007). In a London setting, there had been a range of work which suggested that the speed and extent of urban change, specifically the role of largely white middle-class gentrification of Inner London and middle-class ethnic-minority suburbanisation, was having a dramatic effect on schools and the circuits of education in the capital (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Vincent et al., 2004; Ball et al., 2004; Butler and Hamnett, 2011; Butler et al., 2013). Bridge's (2007) work in particular, sought to distinguish between the role of middle-class gentrifiers in Bristol and their engagement with the school system and how the metropolitan gentrifiers of Butler and Robson's (2003a) study had a broader range of options and educational strategies available to them. In contrast, gentrifiers in Bristol found themselves reverting to normative, 'traditional' middle-class strategies of moving to the catchment area of suburban schools when their children were of school-age (Bridge, 2006a). This approach to understanding in effect, how middle-class circuits of education differed across provincial and metropolitan settings revealed the limits of the discourse around the existence of a 'global gentrifier class', in some ways confirming the notion of a metropolitan, middle-class habitus of school choice and London-specific circuits of education. However, the history of institutional hierarchies between schools and the deeper underlying history of uneven regional development and how this continues to affect both circuits of education and the structure of the socio-spatial hierarchy of schools (both locally and nationally) was not examined. Both these themes are central here.

An overarching theme of this research, is the examination of how contemporary middle-class and elite circuits of education in London and Sheffield relate to a consistent historical dualism in the geography of elite and middle-class schooling and the concentration of wealthier middle-class and elite groups in the South-East of England. As such it extends more recent work which has examined the concentration of various elite class fractions in London (Cunningham and Savage, 2015) as well as the clustering of the elite in the 'golden triangle' of Oxford, Cambridge and London universities, with Bristol, Exeter and Durham hanging on their coattails (Wakeling and Savage, 2015a; 2015b). However, it also draws on older work which attempted structural historical analyses of British society (Anderson, 1964; Cain and Hopkins, 1987; Martin, 1988; Massey, 1995) and the cultural, political and economic dominance of what has been variously called the 'Oxford-London-Cambridge axis' (Shils, 1955), the 'national accumulator' of 'greater and greater London' (Dyos, 1971), the 'Crown Heartland' (Nairn, 2011), 'London and the English desert' (Dorling, 2008), an 'escalator region' (Fielding, 1992; Savage et al., 1995) and more recently a 'metropolitan vortex' (Cunningham and Savage, 2015; Savage, 2015b). This thesis thus sets the analysis of middle-class and elite practices in education against the backdrop of structural analyses

of the history and geography of British, and especially English, capitalism and its social structures.

The research provides what in Massey's (1995: 117) terms could be considered a 'structural analysis' of the geography of educational power – a historical analysis of contemporary circuits of education which sees them not only as the result of contemporary processes of urban change like gentrification, but also as part of a much broader interwoven, partially path-dependent set of regional inequalities which have concentrated a long-lasting nexus of educational power on London and the South-East. Moreover, the evidence presented suggests that changes in housing and the differential trajectories of regional economies since the 2007-08 crisis are affecting and will continue to affect middle-class strategies towards education. This has implications for both private and state schools in both the South-East and other 'provincial' regions, but also indicates the contours of substantial changes in what it means to be 'middle class' across different areas of England. In understanding this contemporary regional geography, I have drawn in particular on Rubinstein's (1986; 1987a; 1987b) historical analyses of the dualism of the middle classes and the very wealthy who tended to both live and educate their children in the South-East of England. However, I understand this dualism to be one of only many cross-cutting socio-spatial inequalities within the broader geography of education and social reproduction. Furthermore, the historical nature of this argument is an attempt, after Perry Anderson (1966: 20), to reconstruct the spatial urban history of schooling and social reproduction in order to understand its present formation. I will discuss the implications of my findings for a substantive analysis of the historical regional geographies of class and schooling below in section 7.4. For now, I focus on drawing out the theoretical contribution made by understanding contemporary educational patterns and structures as a result of long-term structural histories and geographies.

My research also makes a broader theoretical contribution to the analysis of education. It blends a Bourdieusian analysis of the field of elite educational institutions with key analyses of 'structural' dimensions of how British, and especially English society has developed. In doing so it takes seriously the question of what is involved in 'transposing' Bourdieu's work on the role of education within the field of power to a different national context (Wacquant, 1996: xiii). Bourdieu has been used frequently across work examining how schooling meshes with *local* urban space (Butler and Robson, 2003a; Reay, 2007; Ball and Vincent, 2007; Reay et al., 2011), but seating a spatial analysis of the field of schooling within a

'structural history' of elite education (Bourdieu, 1996), regional inequality and patterns of class formation has not been the core focus of Bourdieu-influenced (urban) sociologies of education. A more explicitly spatial analysis of the urban *field* of schooling has only rarely been attempted (Byrne and Rogers, 1996; Bridge, 2006b), despite entreaties highlighting the theoretical potential of field for urban sociology (Savage, 2011). But this work also looks beyond local geography to situate elite and middle-class dominated schools and circuits of education within the broader regional geography of England. This regional perspective requires thinking theoretically about how regional inequalities between school systems are produced over time. In doing this, as I will outline, below, this thesis draws on and extends debates in economic geography in particular developing Massey's (1995: 116) conception of regional differences as produced in part by 'layers of history which are sedimented over time'. Whilst this is also important for thinking about the continuing influence of historical change at the neighbourhood or city scale, it has a particular relevance to thinking about how regional inequalities structure the field of schooling in England. Combining this with a historical lens means a mode of study which puts a historical sociology and a historical geography of contemporary educational power centre-stage. The guiding focus here is on understanding institutional inertia, the accumulation of symbolic capital at an institutional level and the persistence of particular circuits of education as a result.

In a school context, this accumulation of symbolic capital has tended to be dependent on creating and preserving a successful, academic sixth form. Tracing the broad historical lineage of the sixth form at a national/policy scale, as I have done at an institutional-level within my case studies in chapters five and six, allows us to see the importance of a historical sociology of educational power. Just as it was at Hightown Grammar from 1900 into the 1960s (Lacey, 1970), creating and maintaining a successful sixth form has remained a key marker of institutional prestige and success due to the continuing 'pyramid of prestige' (Halsey, 1961) in education. Preserving these structural inequalities has involved deliberately maintaining academic A-levels (Rhoades, 1987) and winning places at prestigious elite universities as the ultimate measures of educational 'success' (Steedman, 1987; Mcinerney, 2016). Both institutions' positions within the field of education and the associated circuits shift and mutate, but in England this has repeatedly occurred against a backdrop of re-created and renewed traditions, circuits and cultural forms. Rhoades' (1987) historical analysis of post-16 examination and curriculum reform over the 1960s and 1970s, revealed how attempts to offer more progressive, less selective and less specialised forms of examination at 16 and 18 were stymied by civil servants, the universities and (private) school associations. Reid and Filby's (1982) diachronic analysis of how the sixth form as a

form of post-16 education stems from, and has acted to preserve, elite educational culture within the state sector further cements this analysis. The EBacc with its privileging of the core subjects of elite academic culture at the expense of vocational and so-called 'soft' subjects is perhaps the latest means of re-entrenching forms of selection which rely on conventional middle-class forms of culture at the Key Stage 4 to 5 transition (Hodgson and Spours, 2011: 211-212). This recalls Johnson's (1989: 97-98) discussion of the persistent historical tendency within English education to create new forms of institutional differentiation by constantly adding new institutional forms or criteria of selection. The academic sixth form is both a means of selection and, when successful, an indication for state schools of association with the elite educational culture of Oxbridge and the public schools. As the values and focus of the academic sixth form are still taken from these elite institutions, it functions both to preserve the prestige and power of elite institutions as well as conferring various degrees of distinction on those schools seeking to replicate these particular educational practices. It is as Cain and Hopkins (2002: 49) put it, the 'genius of the English, in Burke's judgement, [...] to infuse tradition with modernity, thereby preserving it', something which clearly applies at schools like King Henry's and others within the 'super-state' elite of London schools (see section 7.2 below). This, combined with the great economic and cultural centralisation of England (Anderson, 2014), makes a sociological and a geographical historical analysis of the contemporary field of schooling in England amenable to a Bourdieusian approach with its emphasis on inertia and persistence rather than change (Carles, 2001).

In combining Bourdieu's conception of field with Massey's insistence on the importance of history in understanding regional division, this thesis provides an useful theoretical lens for understanding educational inequalities at a regional scale. Alongside looking at circuits of education and institutional hierarchies in a provincial city as opposed to London, chapter four also examined how the regional historical layering of class relations and hierarchies of educational institutions continues to structure the contemporary geography of educational inequality. There are two key theoretical contributions which are being made here, firstly in underlining the importance of a historical geography of regional inequality to understanding the contemporary geographies and sociologies of education. Secondly, it also provides the scope to extend our understanding of what constitutes a region. Whilst Massey's (1995: 116) analysis did note that the regional sedimentation of history was not purely economic but included 'cultural, political and ideological strata' as well, her focus was nonetheless on the regional geography of production. What this thesis contributes here is highlighting how we

might begin to think of the role of education and the associated particular patterns of social reproduction (and less frequently social mobility) as both constitutive of and influenced by regional divisions. This is not the first analysis to think through this regional geography of education, with work by Rees *et al.* (1997: 491-494) highlighting the how the specific histories of gender, industry and schooling combine to shape attitudes towards education in South Wales. In Cooke's (1985: 211) discussion of the same region, he describes regions as bounded by the 'the limits of dominant class practices'. Like Massey, Cooke's analysis of the politics of the South Wales mining valleys, concentrates primarily on how the productive base, the labour process and the ownership structure, specific social relations and institutional specificities combine to form particular regional patterns of class domination. The role of schooling is absent. However, by drawing from this debate over theorising regions within economic geography we can use this lacuna to better understand and think through the findings on the geography of education presented here. The dominance of institutions in the South-East over access to Oxbridge, the higher participation in the private sector and the distinctive geodemographic intakes of the private schools – we can see how we might mark out London/ROSE as being bounded in part by a distinctive system of schools and universities which both maintain and are shaped by specific dominant class practices. Moreover, by bringing Bourdieu in to describe how schools accumulate cultural capital (in the form of Oxbridge scholarships, now places, and particular sporting or extra-curricular activities) and economic capital (in the form of endowments, see Appendix A), we can see how the regional histories of class and schooling combine and continue to affect the contemporary geography and sociology of educational inequalities. This understanding of the historical regional geography of education, defines regions in terms of the practices of the dominant classes in education.

However, care ought to be taken to ensure that broader class practices, gender relations or ethnicity are not absent from a regional historical geography of contemporary education. In many ways, this also underlines the limits of a Bourdieusian understanding of social reproduction through education as primarily ensuring the reproduction of the elite and middle classes, with relatively little attention given to ethnicity or gender (Skeggs, 2004). Whilst Bourdieu has been used here to help provide a framework for understanding institutional strategies of distinction and how they combine with particular patterns of class formation, he is less useful in discussing how the geography of elite or middle-class education meshes with ethnic-minority middle-class experience or how gender influences elite schooling. The latter issue is one which, whilst I have highlighted the role of a strange 'gentlemanly' masculinity persisting in the values of King Henry's, I have not combined this in my analysis

or theorising at a broader city or regional scale. There is substantial work to be done in examining the regional geography and history, for example, of single-sex schooling, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that single-sex schooling is more common in London than in other cities. In Sheffield for example it is only in the private sector that single-sex education has survived, *all* the other schools in the city are co-educational, implying a distinctive historical geography of education which again continues to shape the experience of students today. Drawing directly on one of the key points of Massey's (1995: 341-349) original text, the production of regional economic differentiation is inter-twined with different gender relations and distinctive regional patterns of women's employment, it is hard to believe that education would be different. A broader historical geography of contemporary educational patterns which sought to examine education beyond the confines of the dominant institutions within national and local fields with their middle-class and, in some cases, elite intakes, would need to examine these issues in greater depth. One example of this is Walker's (2013; 2015) analysis of the distinctive geography of mechanics institutes in the late 19th century. These institutes, many of which would later be absorbed into Council Schools of Art and Design and eventually Polytechnics, were, like the nascent public schools of the period, spread nationally but concentrated in the industrial North of England and West Yorkshire in particular. This geographical distribution is almost the diametric opposite of the concentration of public schools on the South-East of England. Despite these caveats, the theoretical approach taken here speaks particularly to the resurgent interest in elites, whilst also providing a regional-historical lens to the renewed interest in the geography of education. It also underlines the scope for a broader theoretical project to understanding the history of contemporary regional divisions within education and the role of educational inequalities in the constitution of regional boundaries.

In understanding these regional and also local hierarchies of schooling, what has been important is taking a relational approach to seeing how concentrations of educational power are constructed. Specifically a key element in developing this relational understanding of hierarchy at the post-16 to HE transition was the use of network analysis methods. The modularity analysis technique applied in chapter four, showed how hierarchies of institutions can be constructed through analysing what institutions operate at similar institutional positions within the field, sharing similar circuits of education in terms of post-16 to university student flows. Thus institutional positions within the field are seen as partly constructed by and through circuits of education. This is true not only on entry at 11, although these circuits are not the key focus here, but also in how schools and colleges control entry and exit at 16 and, crucially, in which universities they serve as institutional conduits for. Combining social

network methods with field analysis to see how individual trajectories and the circuits they form, congeal as a form of symbolic capital accumulating over time as paths between particular schools and universities become more (or less) well-trodden. This extends De Nooy's (2003: 316) argument which has seen SNA as amenable to a Bourdieusian correspondence analysis approach. This meshing of field and circuits provides a deliberately relational approach to understanding the hierarchy of institutions and the patterning of social reproduction at the post-16 to university transition. Similarly, understanding what is specific about the metropolitan field of schooling London requires an understanding of how particular urban conditions such as house prices or ethnic-minority populations are present, different or absent in provincial cities and how this affects the local educational hierarchy. As I have noted already, examining how circuits differ in a metropolitan, London setting as opposed to provincial urban fields of schooling was a central guiding focus to the thesis and it is to these specificities of metropolitan circuits of education that I now turn.

7.2. The 'new urban elitism' of London's 'super-state' schools and the relative stability of suburban comprehensives in provincial cities

There is a need to avoid 'simplistic binaries' of North and South England and when observing class inequalities outside the capital to acknowledge the existence of "onshore islands" of economic, social and cultural accumulation located outside of the south-east of England' (Savage, 2015b). By any standards, the constituency of Sheffield Hallam where the Hallam circuits of suburban middle-class oriented schooling are concentrated, is one of these 'onshore islands' and indeed the polarisation of wealth within the city is stark and well-documented (Thomas et al., 2009). And yet, when it comes to the circuits of education and institutional hierarchy seen within the state sector, Sheffield's field of schooling lacks the fierce competition for access to, and the complex institutional forms of, the new urban elitism which are present in the capital's sub-set of super-state schools. There is no school in Sheffield which comes anywhere near the applicants to places ratio of HBS, which in 2015 received 2230 applicants for just 93 places, a ratio of nearly 24 applicants per place. Even in non-selective schools, Ashmole School, which has a similar profile of HE destinations to Valley Hills School and is also a suburban former secondary-modern, had 1294 applicants for 261 places, just under 5 applicants per place (Barnet Council, 2015). Schools in Sheffield, even the sought-after suburban comprehensives, simply do not compare. In 2015, Valley Hills received an estimated 348 applicants for 246 places, or 1.4 applicants per place. Not only is the 'suburban strategy' discussed by Bridge (2006a) in reference to Bristol still

dominant in Sheffield as a key mode of middle-class social reproduction through the state sector, but these schools operate under totally different social and urban conditions to suburban schools in London.

This is particularly true when it comes to the differential in house prices as a multiple of median incomes in the areas adjacent to Valley Hills and Woodtham Park School. The literature on the link between high-performing schools and house prices is quite extensive (Leech and Campos, 2003; Gibbons and Machin, 2008; Hansen, 2014) but it has less frequently looked at variation across different cities in the UK (Savills, 2009; Glen and Nellis, 2010). The data provided on house prices as a multiple of median earnings of particular occupational groups provides an alternative perspective. Instead of looking at the link between attainment and house prices, this approach allows us to understand the affordability of housing in school catchment areas for different occupational groups, and how this varies across different cities. The findings do not account for house or family size or median salary at different ages, class- and potentially geographically-differentiated rates of intra-familial transfers or the micro-geography of distance to school recruitment in London. However, for the latter point at least, this is likely to have produced an underestimate of house prices in the Fortismere catchment, given the substantial variation in prices within the Muswell Hill neighbourhood even on the same street (Bar-Hillel, 2008) and the tendency for properties close to desirable schooling to have weathered the recession better than those elsewhere (Savills, 2009). Despite these caveats, the data presented earlier suggest clear regional differentials in the accessibility of suburban comprehensives associated with conventional post-grammar school patterns of middle-class social reproduction. Schools like Valley Hills are positioned within a clear and stark local urban and educational hierarchy and whilst house prices are clearly and steeply polarised within Sheffield, the catchment areas of suburban schools in south-west Sheffield remain far more accessible to a wider range of parents than those around Muswell Hill. In Sheffield, the median house price near Valley Hills School would be around 8 times a nurse's or teacher's income, next to Fortismere the multiple increases to 22 times! This has huge implications both for the future diversity of intake in certain London state schools and for what it says about economic capital and the meaning of conventional understandings of occupation and class in the capital versus smaller provincial cities. It suggests that whilst lower professional occupations are sufficient to buy into suburban educational enclaves in Sheffield, this is no longer possible in the capital. London now operates as a cauldron of social and economic pressures, re-shaping conventional patterns of social reproduction through schooling and class identities, largely as a consequence of its housing market.

These pressures of access to socially desirable forms of secondary schooling were clearly felt at King Henry's Grammar albeit through an intensely competitive entrance exam requiring substantial tutoring,⁸³ rather than house prices. Whilst London's housing market threatens the normative assumptions of status and housing for less well-paid professionals, King Henry's is playing a central role in forging a new ethnic-minority educational elite within the state sector. Whilst at both King Henry's and Henrietta Barnett there is significant ethnic-minority working-class and 'intermediate' class (NS-SEC 3) presence, at both schools and particularly at King Henry's, there is a large British-Indian middle class (NS-SEC 1-2). There is thus simultaneously a process of upward mobility and a process which represents the inter-generational embedding of a British-Indian middle-class, with recent generations gaining access to the *elite* British universities through KHS. This case study forms one strand of a broader new urban elitism within London's schools which I will now examine. As I noted in chapter five, Abbas' (2007) and Butler and Hamnett (2011) have flagged the growing British-Asian intake of Birmingham's grammar schools and the suburbanisation of the British-Asian middle class in East London respectively. The similarities with Birmingham's King Edward VI Foundation grammar schools are important, particularly as they suggest processes of cementing class status for the children of British Indian middle-class families are occurring through the grammar school system in provincial cities too. However, access to Birmingham's grammars is distinctly less competitive than at KHS (11.7 applicants/place for 2015-16 entry and over 2000 applicants), with most Birmingham grammars having an applicants to places ratio of around 4-5 applicants per place with around 1000 applicants each (Birmingham Council, 2015). These differences in competition for school places is also shown by the map (Figure 27, p. 221) of first preferences with Birmingham, Dudley, Walsall, Trafford and Manchester the only urban authorities coming close to the level of competition for entry to secondary admissions seen in London.

Besides admissions, what is special about King Henry's Grammar is its position in the field of schools within London but also nationally. It competes essentially at the same level in attainment and Oxbridge participation terms, as all but a handful of independent schools. Despite the significant personal costs this entails for students and parents (both figuratively and financially through travel and donations), they are rewarded with places at traditionally elite-dominated universities (Wakeling and Savage, 2015a; 2015b). King Henry's also

⁸³ Tutoring agencies are concentrated on London and the South-East underlining the distinctive and fraught conditions within London's schools (Tanner et al., 2009: 21-22).

deliberately encourages students to apply to a sub-group of elite universities, further suggesting that there are a sub-set of elite 'feeder schools' to elite universities. From an institutional perspective, through choice of sports, debating activities and other shared extra-curricular events the school is also clearly aligning itself culturally with the private schools of London and the South-East. This gives the school a distinctive position within the sub-field of London's elite state and private schools suggested by the modularity analysis of chapter four, far closer to the older, more traditional elite core of the private sector in terms of Oxbridge participation and organisational culture than other non-selective schools in this grouping. For the families in question this means accessing King Henry's is not only a question of accessing the 'elite' school of the local or even regional (i.e. London) field of schooling, rather this is an institution which competes at a national scale with the elite of the private sector.

This latter point – that these super-state schools increasingly compete with the private sector, not the majority, state sector, is key to understanding what is 'new' about the circuits and institutions involved in this new urban elitism in London. When we talk about 'new', we are talking about a long-term process of 30-40 year change. Just as the process of 'systematisation' of the public schools and the grammar schools occurred over several decades (Honey, 1977; Simon, 1987; McCulloch, 2006), so the norms, means of selection relationship to new social and ethnic formations, governance forms and educational culture of these elite state schools have taken a similar length of time to develop. Amongst the 'super-state' schools of the sub-field of elite private and state schools suggested by the modularity analysis of chapter four, we find a mixed set of state institutions including both grammar schools that escaped comprehensivization or schools which are now 'comprehensive' in name only. Many of the latter grouping were often former grammar schools that successfully navigated the transition to 'comprehensive' status, either through religious entry requirements (London Oratory) or through spatial restrictions on entry through the housing market (CSG, Fortismere). However, the intense years of comprehensivization during the 1970s have been followed by three decades of gradual erosion of local authority control, increasing autonomy for schools and enormous growth in competitive pressures through league table and expanded OFSTED inspections. What is 'new' about the gradual creation of these 'super-state' schools within a London setting is also simultaneously 'old'. The term 'regressive modernisation' (Hall, 1987) clearly applies to King Henry's at an institutional level given the culture fostered by successive heads, but the term also implies collectively to what this sub-field means for the hierarchy of schools within London and nationally.

In many ways, what has been created is a sub-set of institutions which increasingly sit between the majority of institutions in the state sector and the private schools. This grouping is internally stratified with schools like King Henry's far closer to the elite, traditional schools of the private sector, with Camden School for Girls, specialised in arts and humanities, much closer to less academically-disciplined, more arts or humanities-centred schools within the independent sector such as King Alfred School, London. Almost exclusively, these schools are autonomous from LEA control through voluntary-aided, foundation or increasingly academy status. This latter point is deeply revealing as these institutions parallel the direct-grant system of centrally-funded, locally autonomous grammar schools which tended to sit at the apex of local state hierarchies in most cities until their closure, amalgamation or conversion to the private sector in the mid-1970s. Despite the growing scandals of parental 'donations' and fundraising at these schools, there is no means of entry directly by fee-paying, unlike under the direct grant system. A culture of expected donations on a regular basis, in exchange for an elite 'state' education again blurs the line between state and private. Moreover, accessing these schools in the first place already requires considerable economic investment, be it through private tutoring or housing. The means of selection are now more differentiated, fragmented and complex but these schools are unified around their role as dominant conduits to elite universities in particular. The rise of these 'super-state' institutions, which by some measures outperform the private sector (Nelson, 2016; Barker, 2016), has received attention previously, particularly as these schools tend to have fewer students on Free School Meals (Sutton Trust, 2006; 2013). These schools exist nationally, many of them being suburban comprehensives of the sort discussed in chapter six, but London's elite 'super-state' schools discussed in chapter five and entirely absent from the field of schooling in Sheffield, present something different. Moreover, the politics, history and geography of the process by which these schools established themselves has been overlooked.

Crucially, the deeply problematic nature of this polarisation of schooling *within* the state sector and particularly in London has been largely ignored. Firstly, the literature, both academic and policy-oriented, examining London's schooling in recent years has emphasised the improved attainment of students on Free School Meals (Wyness, 2011; Cook, 2013; Greaves et al., 2014) and the broad improved achievement within London's state-funded schools. Whilst the improvements are substantial and important, the literature has done little or nothing to examine the changing inequalities in attainment *between*

schools both within the state sector and including the private sector. The London Challenge programme which is credited with some of the success of these schools ran from 2003-2011. However, the processes of institutional transformation amongst the 'super-state' schools examined in chapter five which form part of the sub-field of elite London schools discussed in chapter four, took place over a much longer period following the transition to a comprehensive system.

Super-state schools are in many ways the creation of a new state elite following the ending of direct grant status, comprehensivization and the closure of grammars. These reforms, which were largely completed by the mid-1970s, were compounded during the period of neoliberal education reform which followed under Thatcher and thereafter (Ball, 1990; Ball, 1997). This period allowed schools increasing autonomy, continued under Labour with schools like Fortismere using Foundation status to enhance their freedom from the local authority and effectively signalling there was no way back to its experimental years of the 1970s (Harrow Council, 2013). What has happened since the late 1970s at the 'top-end' of London's state sector has been the creation of an elite subset of state schools, which, though internally variegated, frequently share more in common with the private sector than the majority of their 'state' school peers. This is the 'other' London effect but one which in policy circles around the current Conservative government and, in London, until the May 2016 mayoral elections at least, was not seen as problematic but rather something to be lauded and celebrated. These super-state schools of London/ROSE have tended to be overlooked in recent research on elite education which for good reasons has concentrated largely on private schooling, in England at least (Van Zanten et al., 2015; Maxwell and Aggleton, 2015a). In policy circles these schools have been lauded, with KHS forming one of the founding members of the Boris Johnson's 'Gold Club' of high-attaining schools. The broad direction of policy since the coalition government of 2010 but arguably also prior to that, never problematized or showed any ambition to deal with inequalities between schools in the state sector from the top down. What has been shown once again here, is that those high-performing state schools in the capital and elsewhere operate are indirectly selecting by wealth – either through the housing market or through tutoring, and have deliberately built-up their reputations over decades and sometimes even centuries. This is far from being a new finding, rather it simply underlines the persistent nature of inequalities between schools and the tendency of governments to avoid problematizing the unequal nature of the playing field, more often preferring to explicitly or implicitly celebrate the hierarchy, ruthless selection and elitism which schools like King Henry's embody.

These elite state schools are also the logical outcome of decades of neo-liberal reform. Under the Conservatives in the 1980s, they could not turn back to selection, though they would preserve it where they could,⁸⁴ instead they fostered differentiation within schools through a deliberately segregated 14-16 curriculum and examination system, the GCSE (Harland, 1988; Lowe, 1989). Combining this with residential segregation and the gradual increase in the *de-facto* school-leaving age created the conditions for the local middle-class continuity circuit. Where urban pressures and competition between schools has been particularly fierce, the terrain was set for the development of these 'super-state' schools. New Labour saw no need to limit differentiation between school types and showed only limited commitment to abolishing selection where it still existed. EBacc reforms under Gove only entrenched the curricular bias towards schools dominated by the middle class (Hodgson and Spours, 2011). It is also necessary to look forwards to how London's school system will develop. Where distance to school is the main means of selection, the housing market will not only exclude lower status professionals but crucially huge swathes of working-class Londoners. The falling percentages of students across London claiming Free School Meals, particularly in Inner London (Department for Education, 2015), speaks to how future generations are being gentrified out, not simply on a local, school-neighbourhood scale (Butler et al., 2013), but on a mass borough-wide level. These urban and educational processes have been 30-40 years in the making and, as I note above, are embedded within historical regional divisions of education and class. Beyond the risks of the polarization of state schooling within London and the concentration of 'elite' state schools in the capital, the broader political implications of this thesis speak to the need for serious structural reform. Just as the move to push English education policy to the right has required a gradual, cumulative shift of cultural and political attitudes towards education, beginning perhaps with the Black Papers in the late 1960s, I would argue a similar project for radical structural change is needed from the left. This is not the place for an extensive discussion of my personal political interpretation of my findings, but these are available elsewhere in a shorter, pithier format (Gamsu, 2016a).

7.3. Circuits and institutional histories at Camden School for Girls and King Henry's and the preservation of an elite 'gentlemanly' educational culture

⁸⁴ King Henry's is the exception, not the rule in this sense. A point which should be emphasised.

The analysis in this thesis provides an understanding of the geography of these new school hierarchies, the spatial analysis of a field of institutions in a Bourdieusian sense, which remains relatively unusual despite the growth of the geography of education more broadly (Butler and Hamnett, 2007; Holloway et al., 2011; McCreary et al., 2013). It also takes a historical perspective to the formation of circuits of education (Ball et al., 1995; Butler and Robson, 2003c; Smith and Higley, 2012) and institutional hierarchies, which is key to understanding the rise of London's 'super-state' schools. In the case of King Henry's, this builds on an interpretation of neo-liberal educational policy-making in England as partly the result of tensions between a cultural-restorationist faction and a more hard-line market-oriented faction within the Conservative Party (Exley and Ball, 2013: 13). The former saw the restoration of conservative, 'traditional' educational values within the curriculum (and initially through the return of selective admissions too) as a central aim of the 1988 Education Reform Act. The institutional trajectory of King Henry's over the last thirty years represents an exemplary and unusual case of the restoration of a conservative grammar school ethos and culture through the grant-maintained scheme, which aptly enough initially referred to these organisationally autonomous schools as 'Crown Schools' (Ball, 2012: 94). Halpin and Fitz (1997) discuss this tendency to 'opt into the past' through the grant-maintained system and King Henry's has taken this to its extreme conclusion with its prefect system, strict discipline, rugby union, water polo, Eton fives, debating and its strong Oxbridge focus all clearly designed to replicate and compete with the institutional cultures of the elite private boys' schools. There is, as Dodd (2014: 30-31) pointed out, a distinctive elite masculinity at work here, which the headmaster's comments about rugby as a 'gentlemanly' sport seem to reinforce. However, this culture is being grafted on to a radically changed city and school system.

The particular strand of the 'new urban elitism' that is present in King Henry's may show all the cultural trappings of the grammar school, having restored the 'traditions' of the school's earlier days of glory, but it is subtly different. Hyper-pressure of competition for entry characterises the circuits associated with the 'new urban elitism' of London's super-state schools. The rise in admissions over the 1990s and 2000s at King Henry's indicates both the upward institutional trajectory of the individual school, but also the growth in pressures and anxiety around social reproduction through the school system. Whilst formally, the remaining grammar schools of London and the South-East still operate under the selective admissions process of the post-war period, in practice their status and entry processes are radically different. The eleven plus is no longer a shared experience but an exam specific to certain

institutions which requires extensive coaching, resulting in extreme pressure being placed on children sitting the exam.

The circuits of education serving these hyper-selective 'super-state' schools of London and the South-East have begun to reflect London's diversity. Amongst London's grammars, King Henry's and Henrietta Barnett are the only two schools where white-British students form a minority. Nevertheless, ethnic-minority suburbanisation has become central to the schools' intakes and success. The dominant group within KHS is now the largely middle-class British-Indian population, arriving on coaches each morning from Harrow and Pinner. The rise of a suburban minority-ethnic, and especially British-Indian, middle class has long been noted (Robinson, 1988), but the consequence of local demographic change on schooling often has a time-lag, something which has been insufficiently recognised in the literature of geography of education up till now. For KHS this change in intake has been central to the rise of the school, providing the school with highly-motivated, 'education-oriented' students with a strong commitment to education as part of a broader familial and community desire for upward social mobility (Modood, 2004; Basit, 2013). For the families concerned however, King Henry's represents not only the opportunity for upward social mobility to a Russell Group university but the high likelihood of accessing one of the more *elite* 'golden triangle' universities within this grouping. This may not guarantee elite occupational status with the pay gap for socially mobile individuals moving into elite occupations also mediated by ethnicity, with ethnic-minority groups impeded financially even if they reach the top salary bands (Laurison and Friedman, 2016). Alongside other North London and Hertfordshire private schools like Haberdashers Boys and Girls Schools, King Henry's and Henrietta Barnett now have substantial intakes from British South-Asian backgrounds. What makes King Henry's so singular and fascinating as an example of the 'new urban elitism' within the state sector is that it indicates the depth of ethnic change occurring within the British middle class. Simultaneously, the regressive renewal of the grammar school at King Henry's also represents the maintenance of old patterns and logics of social reproduction as well as educational cultures.

Whilst there has been significant work examining the role of the ethnic-minority middle class, its strategies towards schooling and its suburbanisation (Archer and Francis, 2006; Butler and Hamnett, 2011), this has not attempted to situate these new circuits in the context of the structural history of reproduction through schooling in England. The resurrection of the traditional, grammar school education with its explicit 'gentlemanly' ethos at King Henry's

alongside the transformation of its intake suggests interesting historical parallels. In the nascent elite public school 'system', a central role of the public schools was to provide the cultural cement of a common education which would fuse together the landed aristocracy, the commercial and financial elites and the growing white-collar professional middle class concentrated on the South-East of England (Honey, 1977; Rubinstein, 1977a). Anderson (1964: 31-33) maintained that this represented the relative 'porousness' of the British ruling class to new social formations, with the middle class effectively held in check by the possibility of 'vertical ascent' through the school system to the upper echelons. Schools like KHS now operate within the same sub-field as the older historical public schools Anderson was referring to and offer a similar possibility of achieving cultural and economic distinction through accessing elite education. This suburban middle-class South-Asian circuit to the elite grammar schools and private schools of north-west London, shows how certain elite and middle-class schools have become porous along lines of ethnicity.

This circuit is something which is clearly new in historical terms, a phenomenon of the last 20 years, but institutionally the culture that has been (re-)created at King Henry's is old. The regressive modernisation of King Henry's means that the educational culture and 'traditions' into which these boys are being initiated and absorbed into is deeply conservative. It still bears the hallmarks of the aristocratic-bourgeois fusion of the 'gentlemanly ideal' which was born in and sustained by the south-eastern public schools (Anderson, 1964; Anderson, 2007; Honey, 1977; Cain and Hopkins, 2002). These stagnant cultural relics, the zombie culture of an aristocratic education that in truth never was, represent the strange residual lingering of a pseudo-aristocratic heritage of elite forms of education (Anderson, 2007). King Henry's represents its super-state form, but Mossbourne Academy's rowing academy and the Durand Academy's Sussex boarding school, represent its continuation within less selective state schools. In many ways the public school, particularly in its most powerful south-eastern institutional forms, alongside Oxbridge, can be considered as allowing the preservation of pseudo-aristocratic, 'gentlemanly' traditions with contemporary British society in much the same way that the country house does (Cannadine, 1994). The key difference is that in the case of the country house this is not wedded to the reproduction of new educational elites and the broader maintenance of structures of social, economic and cultural inequality. Similarly there are also parallels with the continuing influence of the gentlemanly elite in the cultural sphere (Miles and Savage, 2012). However, I would argue that the partial preservation of this elite's cultural and political influence is, in a sense, less

pernicious and politically problematic than the absence of any cultural challenge to the powerful educational culture which fostered it. The opening up of this culture to a diversified middle class and its downward permeation through some of the new Academies presents a massive challenge to the reframing of education as a radical progressive force.

Despite the dominance of the public school aesthetic and practices at King Henry's, the new urban elitism is not merely characterised by this more 'traditional', selective form. The conduits to elite HE within London and the circuits that serve these 'super-state' schools are more varied. Camden Girls is indicative of another strand in the fabric of elite state schooling in London.⁸⁵ Cunningham and Savage (2015: 342-343) show the clustering of the cultural elite in Camden, as well as in Muswell Hill and Crouch End, the former being the catchment of Fortismere School. For CSG, this finding chimes with the school's orientation towards arts and humanities subjects, as well as generous donations from various political and cultural figures. Whilst in pure attainment terms, CSG does not operate on level pegging with King Henry's, the large influx from the private sector at 16 is very unusual, even within London, marking a distinctive role for the sixth form within the school. The school's location means this role extends beyond the preservation of institutional status commonly found in former grammar schools or comprehensives which retained their sixth form (Kerckhoff et al., 1997). Banded admissions and the presence of some social housing within the *de facto* catchment area of the school go some way to ensuring the school's diversity on entry at 11, but it seems hard to see how house prices will not leave the school increasingly the preserve of the very wealthy in future. Furthermore, the influx from the private sector at 16, combined with the substantial economic and cultural capital of many of those who enter at 11, allow clear questions to be asked about how 'comprehensive' this school actually is. This question can be levelled at many of the other 'comprehensive' schools within the sub-field of elite institutions suggested in chapter four.

It reflects the broader failing of comprehensive reform to anticipate the potential effects of residential segregation by class and ethnicity as well as the disinterest of subsequent governments in reducing inequality between schools. CSG also highlights the distinctive metropolitan circuits of education of London elites who opt into the state sector at 11 or 16.

⁸⁵ Not all elite private or state schools adopt these 'gentlemanly' traditions as CSG revealed. Similarly, a broader survey of gentlemanly practices examining the use for example of 'houses', prefects and particular sports would provide more conclusive evidence regarding the preservation of this culture and any particular geography of its preservation.

Though it cannot be shown empirically, the presence of the GBCS ‘cultural elite’ in Camden (Cunningham and Savage, 2015), very likely contributes to a distinctively affluent grouping amongst those entering at 11, with this situation reinforced by the scale of the private-sector influx at 16, conditions which are simply absent outside of London. Elite state provision outside of London, particularly at schools and colleges with strong Oxbridge participation, remains an area of the analysis presented here which could be strengthened, though there is no shortage of potential sites for future research.⁸⁶

In and of itself, the description of CSG as an ‘elite’ state school is not new *per se*, rather what is new is that it forms part of a broader subset of ‘super-state’ institutions operating within the capital. These institutions are not exclusive to the capital, but they are certainly concentrated there as suggested by the maps in chapter four. The rise of these schools reveals the weakness of comprehensive education reform without its joining to a broader systematic reform of post-16, the universities and society more generally (Pedley, 1977). It also indicates the strength of the regressive modernisation begun under Thatcher. It would be easy to see this as representative of ‘a constant tendency to revert to a bipartite or tripartite division across very different formal [institutional] structures’ within English education (Johnson, 1989: 98). This is certainly partly the case, but it also reflects deeper more substantive changes in the constellations of English class structures. There is, as I noted at the start of this sub-section, the renewal of a clear geographic division in patterns of social reproduction through schooling, which in part reflects the distinctive regional gaps in income and the overwhelming concentration of elites on London. This latter issue reflects the persistence and creation of a new form of the old dualism of the middle classes with an acute and growing awareness of the distinction between London and the South-East, and the rest of England and the UK. It is to this dualism which I know wish to turn.

7.4. From metropolitan vortex to south-eastern circuits of power and persistent dualisms of class and education

The discussion in chapter four of a system of Oxbridge feeder schools in the South-East corroborates the argument of a distinctive infrastructure of elite social reproduction in the

⁸⁶ Candidates which have appeared across mapping both the 2011-12 and 2010-11 data on HE include Farnborough Sixth Form College in Hampshire, Hills Road in Cambridge and outside the South-East the grammars of Trafford and Birmingham, Colyton Grammar in Devon and Durham Johnstone Comprehensive in Durham.

London. Analysis of the GBCS has shown both the predominance of elites dwelling in London and the South-East more broadly, as well the key role of the 'golden triangle' of London universities and Oxbridge in educating these same elites (Cunningham and Savage, 2015; Wakeling and Savage, 2015a; Wakeling and Savage, 2015b). What this thesis reveals is that this 'Oxford-London-Cambridge axis' (Shils, 1955) is underpinned by a distinctive south-eastern constellation of elite feeder schools. The analysis of the nationally available Oxbridge data suggests that the 'metropolitan vortex' could partly be a circuit. Oxford and Cambridge disproportionately recruit from the South-East of England and London and within these regions, particularly from a group of elite feeder schools, which are largely, though no longer exclusively, private schools. Given this south-eastern intake bias, it is likely that for a significant number of students from Oxbridge on elite trajectories, going to work in London simply means returning to the city they grew up and were educated in. The vortex effect of London's elite micro-geography (Cunningham and Savage, 2015) and the 'golden triangle' of elite south-eastern universities (Wakeling and Savage, 2015a) might be constructively re-framed and our analysis extended by combining this with an understanding of how circuits of education work at the neighbourhood to sub-regional scale (Butler and Hamnett, 2011; Ball et al., 1995). Examining the geography of this intermediate stage has been a major contribution of this thesis, attempting to knit together more recent analyses of a changing social structure and geography of class with work which has approached the local geography of schooling. Merging these forms of analysis might allow us to reveal broader circuits of power, not merely a circuit of education, as these trajectories are dependent on the broader concentration of cultural and economic power on the capital itself and involve moving out of education and into employment. Showing this comprehensively using administrative data is not possible here but there may be scope to do this in future given the linking of graduate loan repayments to individual HESA (and thus NPD) records. This is a rich area for future research, though one which comes with important caveats as to the potentially worrying political implications of the data collection for HE.

The quantitative analysis of HE progression provided here is by no means the first to pick out this south-eastern bias. Hoare's (1991; 1994) analysis also revealed the over-representation of students from the independent sector in universities in the South-East more broadly. The Sutton Trust (2011: 10-13, 48-51) also noted the geographical bias in Oxbridge acceptances, with the local authorities with the highest percentage of students gaining places being in London and the South-East, with Trafford the only Northern exception. However, the Sutton Trust (2011: 10-13, 44-47) noted that this geographical bias is less present when looking at the thirty most selective universities and Manley and

Johnson (2014) found that controlling for other factors, Russell Group universities actually over-recruited in parts of the North of England.⁸⁷ Given the geographical spread of Russell Group universities this is perhaps less surprising and is also in line with the location quotient analysis which also suggests a less distinctive regional pattern (see p. 119). For Oxbridge however, the spatial cluster analysis and the location quotients seen above, seem to corroborate the specific nature of these south-eastern circuits of power. Whether or not this geographical bias extends to other institutions within the Russell Group with large percentages of elite graduates would require more granular data on university recruitment across England and not just for Sheffield and London as we have here. The lack of *national* NPD-HESA individual-level data does limit our ability to discuss the hierarchies of schools suggested by their destinations at a more granular level. This is a result of the shift in emphasis as the thesis progressed, moving from purely focussing on London and Sheffield to having a broader regional-national lens as well. Within London however, the specific patterns of recruitment of Oxbridge and Bristol with strong feeder-school type relationships do suggest that this could be the case, at least for the University of Bristol.

Theoretically, the approach taken here towards the geography of HE destinations is also very different. Whilst the quantitative approaches just cited have tended to avoid a specific theoretical lens, instead orienting their work towards discussion of policy implications, the approach taken here is very much driven by a structural historical and spatial critique of social reproduction. As I noted above, I draw on the work of Bourdieu (1989) on field and Massey (1995) on regions, as well as pulling in historical analyses of the role of education in the geography of British social structure (Anderson, 1964; Rubinstein, 1987; Wakeling and Savage, 2015). In particular I have sought to respond to Robert Anderson's (1995: 31) astute comment that Rubinstein's (1977: 621; 1986: 200) contention that the geographical dualism between the middle classes of North and South England was also reflected in a substantively different engagement in education to those using the Oxbridge-oriented, Anglican public schools of the South, was 'not fully demonstrated empirically'. My object here has not been to demonstrate whether Rubinstein's hypothesis was true for the education of elites in the late 19th century and first half of the twentieth century. Rather, I have used this as a means of analysing the contemporary educational dominance of the

⁸⁷ Manley and Johnson (2014: 263) focus purely on schools in the state-sector, as there was no attainment or school intake characteristics for independent schools. Given the huge variation between private and state comprehensives in winning places at Russell Group universities, as well as the substantial geographical variation in the percentage of students in private school, it is a little surprising that the implications of excluding schools from the private sector are not given more attention in the paper.

South-East in terms of a historical understanding of how class and education have meshed with space and place in the past in ways which continue to influence the present. This approach breaks new ground as a historical analysis of the contemporary spatial field of schooling and renews a historical sociological approach within the sociology of education. It combines a Bourdieusian analysis of field, with historical and geographical analyses of British society, using these historical geographies and urban histories of education to provide what I would describe as a historical geography of contemporary educational power.

Where the dualism posited by Rubinstein has most clearly re-appeared in relation to education and class is in the current fate of the private sector. Whilst elite education has seen a renewed interest of late (Van Zanten *et al.* 2015; Maxwell and Aggleton, 2015; Kenway and Koh, 2015) and this has sometimes included geographical analysis of private schools and their local contexts (Brooks and Waters, 2015), the actual geography of private schooling within the UK has not received any recent analysis. Previous research by Coates and Rawstron (1971) and Bradford and Burdett (1989; 1990) noted the clear division between private school participation between North and South. Regionally however, as I discussed above, the analysis in chapter four suggests a sharply polarised picture since the 2008-09 crisis, with figures both in percentage and absolute terms steady or growing in London and the South-East whilst dropping sharply across other regions, particularly in the North-West and some areas of the North-East. The ACORN data on the regional differentiation of intakes across the UK in 2006-07 provide significant evidence for the possible socio-economic basis for this regional division in trends in participation since. Whilst not providing detailed individual level data on cultural, economic and social capital of families using the private sector, they reveal how private schools in London and the South-East recruit from neighbourhoods which are substantively different from schools in the North, the Midlands and Wales in particular. The presence of students from neighbourhoods dominated by cosmopolitan urban professionals in the private schools of London and the South-East and Scotland does suggest a particular geography to intakes and patterns of class formation and structure. They suggest that private schools in the South-East and Scotland are sustained in part by a larger urban professional grouping, with substantial cultural and, to a slightly lesser degree, economic capital. In contrast private schools in the North, Wales and to a lesser extent the other provincial regions have a far smaller presence of students from these neighbourhoods, instead recruiting above national average shares of students from less affluent, less cultural capital rich suburban neighbourhoods. These data, imperfect a proxy for social class as they are, also provide a rare glimpse as to the possible forms of cultural and economic capital associated with private schooling and how they vary regionally.

This still does not provide us with a conclusive answer to the suggestion by Rubinstein that the broader nexus between Oxbridge and the public schools of the South-East was underwritten by a cultural and economic division between the middle classes of the North and South. Nevertheless, it provides us with a significant insight into this dynamic, giving some partial recognition of the regional class cleavages which play into differential regional private school participation.

This quantitative evidence strikes a chord with evidence from various media interviews with headteachers (McCall, 2015) and internal research carried out by private schools in the North into their own intake, prior to their conversion to free school status (See p. 129). Several schools made reference to less affluent families who have been less able to weather the downturn in the economy since the crisis (On the negative effects of the crisis on 'second order' UK cities, see: Champion and Townsend, 2012). These challenges families that use/d private schools in the North, Midlands and other provincial regions seem to have had a significant effect on the likelihood of free school conversion or in some cases, merger or closure. The phenomenon of free school conversion for independent schools indicates a clear 'regressive' and 'traditional' logic within contemporary neoliberal school reform since 2010. Institutionally these conversions work to bolster and preserve institutional forms and 'academic' curricular emphasis in areas where private schools are few and far between. Whilst conversions represent a new phenomenon and mark out a clear distinction between Coalition/Conservative use of neoliberal policy to increase school autonomy and that of the New Labour government, they also represent strands of continuity with earlier policy. The Assisted Places scheme also acted as a massive subsidy to the private sector and contributed to a bulge in private school participation reaching its peak in the late 1980s and into 1990. Bradford and Burdett (1989: 51) noted how this scheme had disproportionately provided places for students in the North and especially in the North-West (Bradford and Burdett, 1990: 41), the region which has seen the biggest decline in private school participation since the crisis. This phenomenon of private school conversion to free school status, with the larger schools taking this route concentrated in the North of England, is the result of the coalescing of different factors. It both suggests and in part stems from a less affluent 'middle class' population, very different from that of the private schools of the South-East. Bolstering these schools through free school conversion thus had a spatial as well as a cultural and political dimension. It has meant the preservation of institutions which are relatively speaking both rarer and less historically viable as schools wholly autonomous of

state support. This ultimately must be seen as a spatialized class logic of the English State,⁸⁸ which has historically intervened to protect private schools, generally of lesser status and more financially vulnerable but still purveying an elite educational culture.

7.5. Provincial contrasts and national patterns: suburban enclaves, their circuits and the renewed importance of an urban politics of education

Outside the private sector, middle-class social reproduction through the state school system also revealed a key dimension of geographical splintering of the class structure. House prices and schooling have long been acknowledged to have been inter-linked, with Guratsky's (1982) indicating early on how this was playing out to the advantage of middle-class parents in suburban comprehensive schools. As I noted above the conditions of the London housing market mean that buying into a suburban comprehensive in the capital has become increasingly inaccessible for large swathes of traditional middle class occupations. Ironically, the (housing) costs of middle-class social reproduction which in the post-grammar school era have increasingly relied on catchment area, have become far more affordable to both lower and higher status professionals outside the capital *because* of the extremity of metropolitan house prices. Conventional suburban strategies are thus not only a product of smaller, less diverse school systems (Bridge, 2006a), they are also a product of the relative weight and shape of the economic capital held by the provincial middle classes. The assertion made by the editor of the Good Schools' Guide, that the northern middle classes are using these high-attaining suburban comprehensives rather than the private sector appears to have real substance here (Warrell, 2014). Metropolitan-provincial fracturing of the class structure also works in favour of the 'middle class' outside the South-East with the costs of social reproduction being lower in many, though not all, provincial cities.

Suburban enclaves of the middle class around particular schools are seen from two new perspectives in this work. Firstly, they are seen as fostering a particular set of circuits from primary through to departure for university which are reliant on middle-class localism rather than spatial mobility. Secondly, these circuits are seen as a longer trend of spatial clustering around schools as a middle-class strategy of 'enclaving'. This has been present since at

⁸⁸ This of course is particularly true of the English state under Conservative control but Labour has in truth never understood or really meaningfully challenged the cultural and social power of either Oxbridge or the elite private schools (Joyce, 2013: 323-324; 2012).

least the post-war tripartite system and especially since comprehensivisation. Colonising particular primary and, in the post-grammar school era, secondary schools became key to ensuring middle-class social reproduction within the state sector. Dominating a local primary school with actual or *de facto* feeder school status to a suburban secondary school with a sixth form has become a *national* strategy of the middle-class since the 1970s. Clearly caveats are needed here – the small number of case studies here mean that this generalisation should be open to scrutiny, but it is certainly true nationally the middle-class already tended to opt into comprehensives with sixth forms from the 1970s (Kerckhoff et al., 1997); this thesis suggests the likely historical geography of this process.

It is this form of middle-class *localism*, rather than spatial mobility⁸⁹ (Ball et al., 1995), which characterises middle-class advantage nationally. That is not to say that the capacity for spatial mobility does not matter, but the practice of parents and/or children travelling long distances is perhaps less common than this form of local middle-class continuity circuit which operates at both Woodtham Park School in London and Valley Hills in Sheffield. This is a national pattern, which is given specific local flavour in different cities depending on the hierarchy of schools. In Sheffield, these suburban enclaved schools remain the dominant institutions within the local field, but these practices at Woodtham Park are not enough, yet, to ensure elite status and furthermore the Sheffield schools are not, as I have said, nationally elite. However, more interesting within the London setting is that this practice of spatial clustering around a primary school with links to a desirable secondary school is precisely what has been happening in gentrified areas of Inner London. Effectively excluded by house price from the already established suburban enclaves of London, gentrifiers have sought in effect to create their own insulated enclaves (Atkinson, 2006; Kulz, 2013) and local continuity circuits in their Inner London neighbourhoods. This historical re-reading of gentrifier behaviour reveals how the new patterns of educational exclusion are partly a re-creation of historic models of white middle-class domination within the school system based on a strong localism and long-established practices of urban and educational colonisation.

The data on the middle-class attendees of Sheffield Hallam from Valley Hills School is particularly important both to our analysis of new geographies of class within England and to our understanding of middle-class localism in the education system. This has implications for

⁸⁹ I am referring to long journeys to a more distant grammar or faith school in this case.

the role of suburban comprehensives within their local hierarchy. Whilst a cosmopolitan, spatially-mobile middle class is certainly in evidence in certain Sheffield state schools, they do not dominate in the way they do in schools like Fortismere or CSG. Moreover, the localism whether it is forced by attainment or not, challenges assumptions of normative spatial mobility for HE that we might expect from children with parents in NS-SEC 1 or 2 (Holdsworth, 2006; Holdsworth, 2009). The geographical concentration of these students in one particular suburban area of the West of Sheffield, Bradfield, also flags the micro-nature of this class distinction within Sheffield. It echoes the discussion of middle-class fractions in the examination of school and childcare choice in Inner London gentrifiers, with the differentiated preferences of parents in Stoke Newington compared to those in Battersea influencing the pedagogical preferences of the nurseries in question (Vincent et al., 2004; Ball et al., 2004). These distinctive class fractional preferences do seem to ‘feed-up’ to higher-level educational choices as Ball et al. (2004) suggested.

This middle-class localism in attending Sheffield Hallam is particularly interesting in relation to Savage’s (2015b) findings regarding the class composition of graduates from Sheffield Hallam and the University of Sheffield taking the GBCS. Compared to similar Russell Group/Post-1992 pairs of universities in Bristol, Manchester, Oxford and Cambridge, the gap between respondents from the ‘established middle-class’ and ‘elite’ groups is substantially smaller than in the other cities.⁹⁰ The earnings gap of graduates is also smaller at ‘only’ £5,000. There is no data, or at least no published data, showing the geography of schooling within the GBCS but it seems likely that at least some of the ‘established middle-class’ came from local secondary schools. Moreover, this group of middle-class locals were also well-represented in Longley Sixth Form College, Sheffield College and All Saints School (an ‘overlapping’ institution in the Sheffield modularity analysis). This is perhaps less surprising given the strong links of these three institutions to Sheffield Hallam, but the fact that Valley Hills maintains very strong links to Hallam, whilst sitting at the apex of the local suburban state hierarchy, is important. It suggests something distinctive not only about the nature of the middle class in provincial cities like Sheffield but also about the nature of the field of post-16 institutions. This hierarchy is largely separate from the south-eastern nexus of elite educational institutions, as even within the suburban state schools the number of students leaving Sheffield for the ‘golden triangle’ universities is small. Despite the success of Valley Hills in examinations and its powerful position at the head of a local academy trust, it does

⁹⁰ They also point out that the Oxford Brookes has more elite graduates than the University of Sheffield, something which chimes with the social network analysis for London which placed Oxford Brookes within the elite modularity class.

not come close to operating in the same elite sub-field suggested by the London, to which both King Henry's and CSG belong.

London's super-state schools are not replicated in Sheffield and the small and limited scale of the private schools means the city does not have an institution which competes nationally on a par with the south-eastern elite schools. Greater Manchester and Birmingham both stand apart and closer to London in their hierarchy of schools, both having retained a selective grammar school system and elite private schools, both of which were former direct grant schools. At the apex of these systems are the private schools, Manchester Grammar and King Edwards VI School in Birmingham and its sister school for girls. These institutions are woven into the elite circuits of education *within* the Russell Group, with high numbers of students attending Oxbridge, the London universities, Warwick, Exeter and Bristol. King Edwards VII School in Sheffield as a state grammar considered itself on a par with Manchester Grammar in the 1940s and 1950s and had been deliberately built-up as, in effect, a state-maintained public school for Sheffield and South Yorkshire (Cornwell, 2005). The political struggle over comprehensivisation, despite the defeat of post-16 reform and more recently academisation in reinforcing the educational pre-eminence of the suburban South West, permanently re-shaped the field of schools within Sheffield and how they would be positioned nationally. This flatter hierarchy is not only the result of the geography of class and elites but is also the outcome of earlier periods of class-driven urban and educational conflict during the period of comprehensivisation. A major contribution of this thesis is providing a historical sociology of contemporary education, allowing us to understand how contemporary experiences and choices are the outcome of moments of struggle over housing and schooling. This also represents a renewal of the tradition of understanding educational change as the outcome of an 'urban politics of education', an approach developed in a UK context by Grace (1984b; 2007: 964-965) drawing on Castells and with parallels to the urban political economy of education developed in the US (Rury and Mirel, 1997). Despite its relevance to the contemporary period of educational change, particularly surrounding academisation, this approach has fallen by the wayside and it is worthy of resurrection. Unsurprisingly given the requirements of academic publishing it is very easy to forget older works of social science, with the result that what appears as 'new', more often means restoring a theoretical or disciplinary framework for analysis which has been applied in the past and simply forgotten or become unfashionable. In fairness to more recent work describing the renewed interest in the geography of education (Taylor, 2009; Holloway et al., 2010), some have acknowledged the legacy of earlier attempts to formulate a spatial analysis of education (Hones and Ryba, 1972). In outlining an agenda for future avenues of

research, there is a need to acknowledge and refer to these earlier analyses when they exist as I will now attempt to do.

7.6. Future avenues of research

Within the field of research on elite education, there is much scope for extending the research agenda to analyse the geography of elite schooling within England in greater depth. The fact that since Bradford and Burdett (1989; 1990) there has been no work examining the geography of private school participation is indicative of how studies of elite education have shifted their focus. Whilst the field of elite educational studies is rich (Van Zanten et al., 2015; Maxwell and Aggleton, 2015a) and also meshed with examinations of how class structures are shifting within the UK (Wakeling and Savage, 2015a), this has as I have stated before tended to overlook the role of elite state schools. The transformations and the post-crisis North-South divide within the independent sector have received press attention (Warrell, 2014; Barker, 2016) and several books and reports have been published on the state of the independent sector and the crisis in fees (Peel, 2015; Turner, 2015; Centre for Economic and Business Research, 2015), but the academic world has been largely silent on these developments. The transformation of elite and middle-class dominated schools across both the state and the independent sector particularly post-crisis but also over the last thirty years deserves to be the focus of a broader research project.

To outline concretely what this might entail, I want to examine some of the more detailed questions posed by the work in this thesis which at best remain only partially answered. Within London the position of other schools aside from King Henry's Boys' School within the private/super-state sub-field suggested in chapter four, underlines the possibility for an examination of the historical trajectories of these schools, particularly those in the state sector. Understanding this new urban elitism would allow an analysis of the role of schooling in the micro-geography of London elites already suggested elsewhere (Cunningham and Savage, 2015). Greater focus on how these schools are the outcome of particular urban politics of education would also provide salient lessons in any project of educational and political transformation. Outside of London, examining how different cities developed particular institutional hierarchies of schools provides a rich scope for a larger work examining the geography of social reproduction across England and the UK. Why for example did Bristol and Edinburgh develop such large private school sectors, why did Birmingham and Trafford retain their selective school systems? It is not that answers to

these questions are necessarily unknown, but they have not been examined comprehensively, from a theoretical perspective of mapping the field of schooling across England and within local, urban fields of schooling.

Within the private sector, mapping the field of institutions could include examining their economic capital. The availability of these schools' accounts on the charities commission website would allow a full mapping of the endowments (or lack thereof) and their broader finances. This would be of political interest to anyone considering the removal of charitable status, as well as revealing the likely historical bias of educational economic wealth on the public schools of the South. Beyond examining the economic capital of these schools, having NPD data for the whole of England (and ideally the rest of the UK) would allow a modularity analysis of university destinations for all schools revealing the national hierarchy of post-16 institutions. Examining the institutional hierarchy of schools and indeed universities through with multiple correspondence analysis would be both novel as an approach to institutional hierarchy within education and to the renewed interest in multiple correspondence analysis, which tends to focus on the positions of individuals within fields, rather than institutions. Mapping the historical geography of Oxbridge applicants by school would reveal how institutional hierarchies have shifted or persisted over time. An initial attempt at this has been made in Appendix B and there is other data available for the 1890s, pursuing this agenda in greater depth could make use of records held by Oxford and Cambridge themselves which have been used in elite studies in the past and more recently (Jenkins and Jones, 1950; Green et al., 2012).

Developing a historical geography and sociology of educational power also shows the absence of research revealing how these institutional geographies of social reproduction also provide another lens for an analysis of the state. Joyce's (2013: 283) comments that Eton was 'not just connected to the centres of English/British power' but was in fact a key element of the infrastructures of the state and the 'geography of British power' more broadly, provide the pregnant phrasing for a future research project. To begin with, as I have argued above, Eton is no longer the only centre of educational power though it in many ways still remains *the* dominant node within the geography of elite English/British education. The precise geography of this south-eastern constellation of schools requires further finessing – the schools of the South-West and East Anglia in their intermediate position in terms of private school participation, as well as the more isolated outposts across the Midlands and the North, reveal a complex picture which requires greater subtlety than has sometimes

been possible here. Nevertheless this is a spatialized and classed logic of recent state actions in propping up certain struggling private schools; free school conversions in the independent sector show the state acting to protect both institutional hierarchy and the cultures of the elite outside of the South-East. But outside of this elite state-private nexus of schooling and the middle-tier of suburban comprehensives, there is a much larger historical geography of urban schooling which needs to be accounted for. The urban working-class comprehensive described by Hall (1974) is now more often academy-sponsored with new forms of authoritarian discipline, architecture and shifting urban geographies. Recent ethnographies (Kulz, 2013; Poros, 2010; Morrin, 2015) provide us with an insight into students' experiences of these urban-educational spaces and these analyses would be complemented by examining how these schools fit within broader institutional hierarchies. State power and the socio-political function of education must be analysed as coterminous with specific local, regional and national urban, social and cultural geographies.

These geographies of education could also contribute to the sociological analysis of shifts in the class structure both nationally and internationally. Analysing the accessibility of school catchments in terms of affordability for different occupational groups across different regions could be extended in its own right to look at a broader range of high-attaining schools across the country. But the data (Office for National Statistics, 2015; Land Registry, 2016) could also be used to produce a time series of affordability of housing for different occupational groups stretching from the mid-late 1990s, when the datasets begin, to the present day. This would reveal how the fall in home-ownership which began prior to the crisis (Belfield et al., 2014) has perhaps excluded particular occupational groups, indicating how the housing market is affecting and re-shaping social structure. The annual survey of hours and earnings allows an examination of this process down to a fairly micro-scale, housing affordability can be examined for individual occupational groups such as teachers, nurses, customer service workers across different regions and over time. These trends could allow an examination of how the class structure is shifting, with reports from the Pew Center (2013) revealing that the American middle-income earners is shrinking, parallel work on the long-term development of the British middle class would feed into international debates. Looking internationally, the combining of new elite suburban development, shifting patterns of class formation and the re-location of elite schools in Santiago de Chile (Mendez, 2015; Gamsu, 2015b), indicates other avenues of international comparison. As well as the need to overcome methodological nationalism (Ball, 2015: 239) in looking at the rise of global elites, there is also a need to acknowledge the still nationally-rooted nature of elite education in many countries (van Zanten and Maxwell, 2015: 89). In developing a research strategy for examining urban

geographies of class, ethnicity and schooling across the Global North and South, which seeks to retain this emphasis on the national specificities of patterns of class and schooling alongside analysing continuities and the movement of global elites, we could do worse than look to the historical work of Müller *et al.* (1987). Their work analysed the history of state interventions in education and the patterns of class formation through schooling across France, Germany and Britain during the key period of 1880-1920 which they termed one of 'systematisation.' A transnational comparison of the recent historical geography of how neo-liberal education reform since the 1980s has re-shaped urban school systems at the same time as gentrification and new patterns of suburbanisation changed the nature of many cities, would provide a fascinating lens through which to approach the contemporary urban sociology of education. Furthermore, it would push us towards a historical geography of educational power which I wish to return to now in concluding this thesis.

7.7. Concluding and moving beyond the thesis

The major contribution of this thesis has been to restore a historical lens to our understanding of the contemporary geography of middle-class and elite schooling. This thesis is in many ways a result of the renewed interest in the urban sociology or geography of education since the early 2000s. It was the combining of gentrification, in many ways *the* central topic to urban sociology or urban geography over the last two decades, with the school choice literature of the 1990s and early 2000s which caught my eye as a final year undergraduate. The formative work on the circuits of schooling (Ball *et al.*, 1995) and the later use of concept to examine specific micro-cultures of gentrification in London (Butler and Robson, 2003c; Ball and Vincent, 2007), made me reflect on my own schooling and wonder how and whether these arguments and the concepts they used would translate to a smaller provincial setting like Sheffield where I grew up. Combining this concept of circuits with the notion of institutional field with a particular urban and spatial emphasis (Savage, 2011) which was present but not central to Bourdieu's analysis of the field of elite HE (Bourdieu, 1989), sought to break new theoretical ground. Understanding institutional field spatially and in an English context, required a process of 'transposition' pulling in key theoretical works from geography (Massey, 1995), extending the theoretical work of combining Bourdieu and Massey suggested elsewhere (Bagnall *et al.*, 2004). In examining how certain historical divisions in education and class formation between the South-East of England and elsewhere have persisted, this historical geography of contemporary education combined analyses of this geographical division (Wakeling and Savage, 2015b) with structural histories

of this powerful economic and socio-cultural divide (Cain and Hopkins, 2002; Rubinstein, 1987b; Martin, 1988). Within this sub-field of the urban sociology of education or the geography of education, approaches which have combined of urban history or the broader history of regional division within England has been largely absent.

There is nothing new about incorporating the history of education and even limited historical geographies within the sociology of education, this was present in the early texts of the sub-discipline in the 1950s (Banks, 1955; Floud et al., 1956; Campbell, 1956). Banks' analysis was clearly a work of historical sociology, tracing the development of secondary schooling from the late 19th century into the early 1950s. When urban education was being taught at the Open University and King's College London in the 1970s and 1980s, the value of local urban history in understanding contemporary patterns of schooling was also acknowledged (Raynor, 1974; Grace, 1984a). Interestingly though, as Bourdieu's work began to be imported into the sociology of education in the UK, it came by the 1990s and 2000s to have its greatest influence in qualitative interview-based studies. *The State Nobility*, and in particular the appendix describing the 'structural history' of elite universities and schools, never really received the same attention as his other work, despite the significant parallels between the concentration of French elites and elite universities in Paris and the similar patterns in and around London and Oxbridge. Despite Bourdieu's (1981) insistence on the importance of history to sociological thinking, this has not been central to how he has been read and used in British sociologies of education. There is still a certain validity to Mill's (2000: 154) critique that 'the use of history rather common in social science today, that is, in fact, more a ritual than a genuine use', limited to describing the research context and generally left at that. This criticism clearly does not apply across the board and Ball's (2012) powerful analysis, of how the actions of the Coalition government amount to a return to the principles of the 'reluctant state' of the 1870s, with a messy 'patchwork' of voluntary and philanthropic provision. We might also ask whether this 'circularity' in how the state is seeking to govern schooling can also be extended to our thinking about how geographies of class formation combine with education. Rubinstein's provocative suggestion that the dualism of middle-class incomes in the late 19th century was also paralleled by a cultural dualism which included a disinclination towards sending their children to Oxbridge and the public schools has provided a useful framing for examining the contemporary geography of private schooling and Oxbridge participation. On both these measures, we can see the continuing division between London and the South-East and the rest of the country. Holding up this long-term historical lens to both regional dimensions of contemporary educational change, as well as using it to contextualise how local institutional histories are woven into

contemporary inequalities within and between schools in provincial and metropolitan cities, allows us to set new patterns of class formation within patterns of historical change. It provides a way to think through how the 'layers' of regional, city and neighbourhood change in geographies of class, ethnicity and education combine to form the present system of unequal education.

As Grace argued in his formative text on urban approaches to understanding education in the UK, combining a spatial, urban understanding of schooling with history is key for an understanding of where power lies within education:

Historical materials of urban schooling make explicit, in ways which contemporary materials rarely do, the confident expressions of intent by the providing classes and the robust statements of resistance from the receiving classes. Such materials make salient the crucial importance of class relations (which are also power relations) and instances of ideological conflict in the provision of schooling. Performing as they do this vital function, they provide an absolutely necessary counter to the superficial, the bland, the apolitical and the "present crisis" focus of much urban education writing. In short it becomes apparent that there cannot be a sense of critical scholarship in urban education if such history is not recovered.

(Grace, 1984a: 36-37)

Grace's analysis here refers indirectly to other urban education work of the 1970s (Field, 1976), but the points made still have a distinctive relevance. I noted above that one of the theoretical contributions of this thesis was to move us towards a historical geography and sociology of educational power, combining the critical sociological, geographical and, in both cases, historical approaches of Doreen Massey and Pierre Bourdieu in the process. An understanding of how contemporary change remains underpinned and shaped by patterns of long-term processes and social and institutional formations with distinctive processes is intended to provide a critical theoretical tool. Understanding the deep historical roots of institutional power structures within education such as Oxbridge and the public schools of the South-East and the educational culture and practices they have propagated remains central to understanding the role of education in perpetuating the shifting forms of elite and middle-class power. This thesis has provided a careful historical geography and sociology of contemporary educational change, but this empirical account speaks once again of the need for deep, structural educational and social change. It is also intended as a first move, an initial foray, into an analysis of education which is both urban and spatial, setting contemporary patterns of schooling, class and ethnicity within long-term historical processes. Working at the interface between sociology, geography and history, is a rich and fertile

position for renewing and extending our critical analysis of education and society and there remains much work to be done.

Appendix A - Of land and the City: The historical financing of elite independent schools

In this appendix I wish to begin to formulate an approach to analysing the accumulation of wealth by a small number of private schools and examine how this wealth and also the broader effects of ties between the City of London and elite private schools, suggests a particular regional geography of elite education. If as Cooke (1985) argued, regions can be understood as the limits of particular forms of dominant class practices and control, there is clear scope for extending the debates within economic geography around the regional development of the UK to include an analysis of the geography of education. In doing so it would also broaden and deepen our analysis of the geography of social reproduction (Thiem, 2009), combining the subtle analysis of regional economic structures of the UK and the broader process of the reproduction of capitalist social relations and particular modes of production (Massey, 1995), with the sociological analysis of the role of schooling in reproducing particular class relations and structures (Willis, 1981; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970).

The medieval foundations of elite public schools, now primarily for boys though they were not always founded as such, are often linked to London's medieval and early modern wealth. Famous founders like Lawrence Sheriff (Rugby), William Harpur (Bedford), Edward Alleyne (Dulwich), Peter Blundell (Blundells), Robert Aske (Haberdasher's) had all held commercial and/or political positions in London where they made their fortunes. These endowments were often, charitable in intention, despite what most later became. These London-based medieval fortunes were made at a time of rapid development in trade and industry which were seven or eight times larger by 1630 than in the reign of Henry VIII, leading Anderson (Anderson, 1974: 174) to argue that it was 'the most dominant capital city of any country in Europe by the 1630s'. The examples given above of London merchants endowing schools during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has been documented in detail by Jordan (1965: 207) who reveals the extent of London's endowment of grammar schools across the UK, which between 1480 and 1660 amounted to the huge sum of £259, 263, 2s. It is certainly true that not all of the schools endowed in the sixteenth century survived, but those that did frequently became dominant institutions either locally or nationally, with the late 19th century the key period of systematisation of the middle-class public school system, away from its charitable roots.⁹¹ For those schools endowed with lands in London, this period of

⁹¹ Christ's Hospital, endowed by Edward VI with large lands in London, was unusual in this respect as it has remained charitable and means-tested to a greater degree than most of these other elite

systematisation and the dramatic expansion of secondary schooling coincided with the extraordinary growth of land values in and around London in the late nineteenth century. The number of schools who gained from this urban expansion is significant as I already noted with many of the most famous and elite institutions involved. This short list made above is not exhaustive and a fuller survey could be made of the historical roots of these schools' wealth.

There is something importantly systematic and structural about the funnelling of wealth produced by London's commercial and financial expansion towards the infrastructure of social reproduction required to adapt to shifts in the economic field of English/British capitalism. Specifically I am referring to the growing economic importance of the City of London relative to industry and the proliferation of white collar jobs of varying statuses and incomes associated with the financial and commercial expansion of London (Cain and Hopkins, 1987). The creation of this educational infrastructure concentrated on the South-East and fostered by its wealth, represented one institutional form of the cultural hegemony of the south-eastern elite and its attendant professional and white-collar lower-middle classes. Robson's (1986: 217-218) and Dyos's (1971: 39) arguments that the industrial revolution was a brief period of provincial challenge to the economic and cultural dominance of London is useful here. The role of London's wealth in founding the early-modern system of grammar schools, returned in the late 19th century. This occurred both directly, with the huge growth of land values in the capital producing large incomes for schools with historically-endowed London land, and indirectly with the expansion of the white-collar middle class in London more so than elsewhere (Rubinstein, 1987b: 100). These families could either afford the fees of the public boarding schools or those of the cheaper and expanding day schools developing in and around the capital in the late 19th century. The long-term historical financing of what are now called the 'public' or independent schools has been closely associated with London both for its unique social structure and because of its

schools. Fearon (My emphasis: , 1868: 268), in his review of London's middle-class schools, commented:

'I have stated that the founders meant to provide an education for the less prosperous of the MC's in certain localities. **For in spite of the frequent use of the terms "poor children," "children of poor inhabitants," and the like, it is I think, obvious that the founders did not expect generally to educate at these schools the children of the lowest or labouring classes alone.'**

This kind of attitude clearly outlined the open class bias of the commissioners writing the reports of the 1860s; they were clearly and explicitly aiming to create a graded secondary school system for the middle class, regardless of the intentions of the original founders.

particular economic role. The City's expansion also led to an increasing number of graduates of the public schools and Oxbridge moving into finance and banking. Public schools and the City have thus long been interwoven; this is a systematic relationship and ought to be understood as such.

Land and now increasingly financial capital in the form of stocks and shares are key to allowing private schools the economic capital required to position themselves as dominant institutions within the national field of schooling. For a small subset of elite schools, economic capital also allows them to position themselves internationally within a transnational field (although again the question of whether this is a field or a network ought to be posed) of elite schooling. Unsurprisingly the wealthiest of these institutions is Eton College with an investment portfolio of £298 million spread over 37 funds and a property portfolio of £80 million, which increased in value by £10 million on the year previous. Christ's Hospital held £203 million in stocks and £142 million in property. These incredibly wealthy institutions are anomalies within the British private sector with most schools having endowments of a few million or nothing at all. Whilst there are schools in the South-East operating with very small endowments, they sit alongside a set of institutions with medium-sized endowments (investment funds totalling several or tens of millions). Thinking about this in relation to school systems in provincial cities – in many cities the independent sector does not have this diversity of super-wealthy, medium and poor institutions. However, this is not merely a question of scale, it is also, again, a historical matter.

A comparison between provincial cities is instructive here. Bristol supports a larger private sector than most provincial cities, still accounting for over 11% of the city's total school population, and yet it has still seen the conversion of three schools into the state sector in recent years (Ursula High School, Colston Girls School and the Bristol Cathedral School). Of the six that remain, four have substantial total investments of between £3.3-14 million each. Bristol Grammar – the wealthiest in absolute terms, received an investment income of £492,805 in the 2013-14 tax year. The founders of these schools had frequently made their fortunes in commerce, trade which for Colston School was explicitly linked to the slave-trading wealth of Edward Colston. This historic wealth appears to have been retained within a city whose economy suffered less from de-industrialisation than cities in the North. In sharp contrast, private schools in Newcastle operate with almost no investment income whatsoever. The same is true in Leeds, with Woodberry Grove School and the Grammar

School at Leeds also having no investment income. There are northern outliers,⁹² such as the Manchester Grammar School, Bradford Grammar School, Rossall and Sedbergh but it is easy to see the potential fracture lines of a future geography of private schooling in which the regional divide in private school participation would deepen further.

City-links: private schools and jobs in the city

The management of wealth which supports the endowments of certain private schools is not the end of the links between The City and the private schools. For both destinations of their alumnae and for the recruitment of their intakes, The City plays a particularly central role. In terms of the links to the City and the effect of financial wealth in providing a strong supportive client-base for the private schools of the south-east, this situation seems only to have increased. In a highly suggestive commentary, Coleridge (1986) described the decline in wealth of traditional professional occupations relative to City stockbrokers who were most able to afford inflation-busting fee increases in the public schools over the 1980s. This situation has if anything become more polarised, with private schools in the South-East more reliant on the wealth of City incomes with continued pressure on the capacity of 'traditional' middle-class professionals to use the independent sector (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2015b: 24; Centre for Economic and Business Research, 2015). Thus the City and the public schools have become even more intertwined.

Again it should be emphasised here that what occurred with the *de facto* strengthening of occupational links between the public schools and the City reflected a change in the needs and mode of operating of the economic field. However, whilst this represented a transformation in the functioning of the City and the culture and organisation of the public schools, in terms of the educational trajectory of public school students it was a mutation rather than a deep transformation. Already in 1938-39, Cambridge students were increasingly recruited from and going to work in, business, commerce and banking (Jenkins and Jones, 1950: 100-102) and certain public schools, Eton in particular, long having developed very close ties to the City of London both in the fathers of the boys and the

⁹² Scotland, and above all Edinburgh with around a quarter of its students in private school, should not be forgotten here and in a larger study this would be a key counter-point to the narrative of Englishness within this thesis. Moreover, the association between Stewart Melville College, Mary Erskine's School and the imperial (the former) and early modern (the latter) commercial and financial wealth of the City of Edinburgh has particular parallels to Bristol. The role of banking and imperial wealth in establishing what would become elite private schools (Fettes College being another clear example) has clear parallels to the London case.

eventual alumni careers (Lisle-Williams, 1984: 347-350). These connections persisted in the post-war period with financial elites tending to be more largely public school and Oxbridge educated than the industrial elites (Stanworth and Giddens, 1974), providing a further parallel to Bourdieu's analysis of divisions within the French economic field over a similar time frame. After the big bang there was still a place for gentlemen in the City, but the 'gentlemanly' institutions of the merchant banks were challenged and to some extent unseated by the arrival of new foreign investment firms (Cain and Hopkins, 2002: 642-643; Thrift, 1990).

Appendix B – Comparing the geography of Oxbridge recruitment 1867 to 2012-13

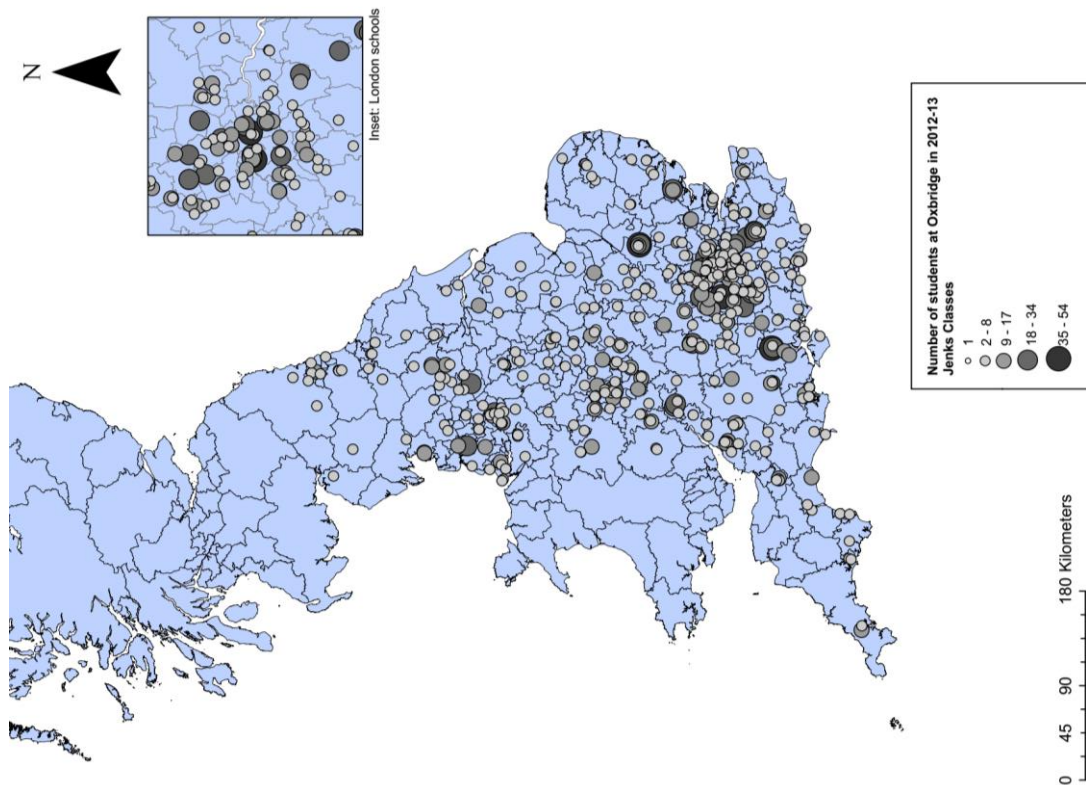


Figure 28 Map showing which schools Oxford and Cambridge recruited from and the number of students, 2012-13.

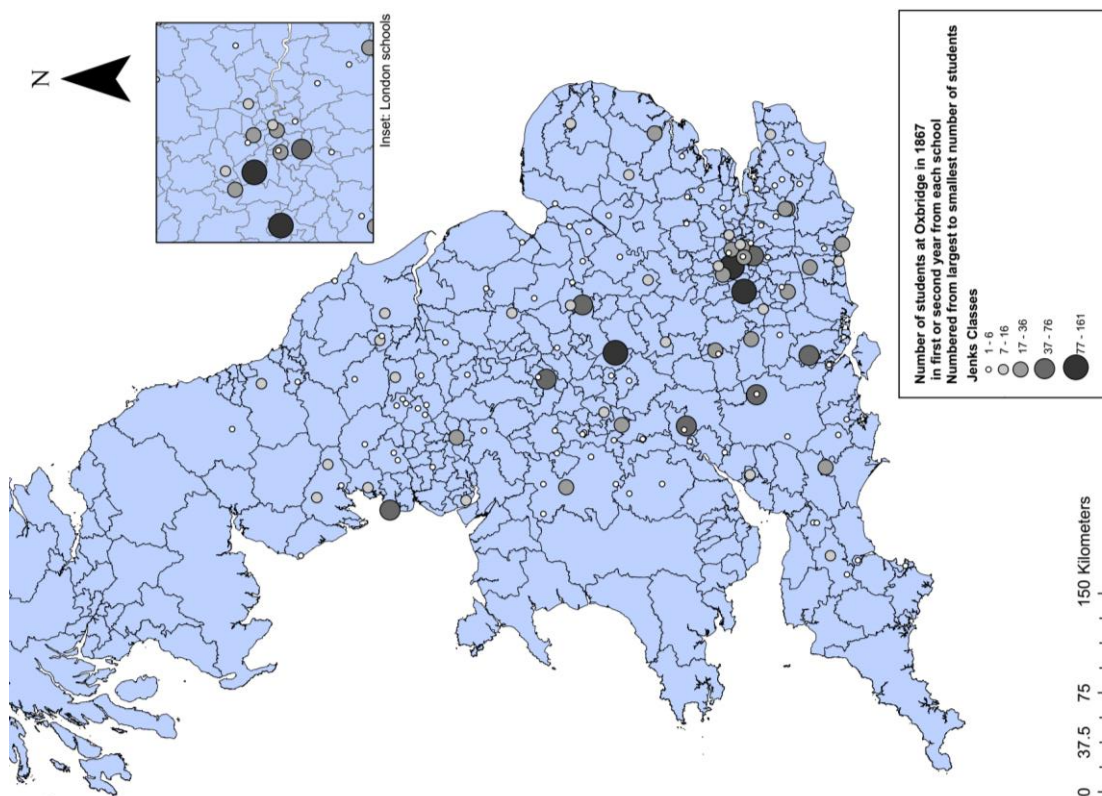


Figure 29 Map showing which schools Oxford and Cambridge recruited from and the number of students, 1867.

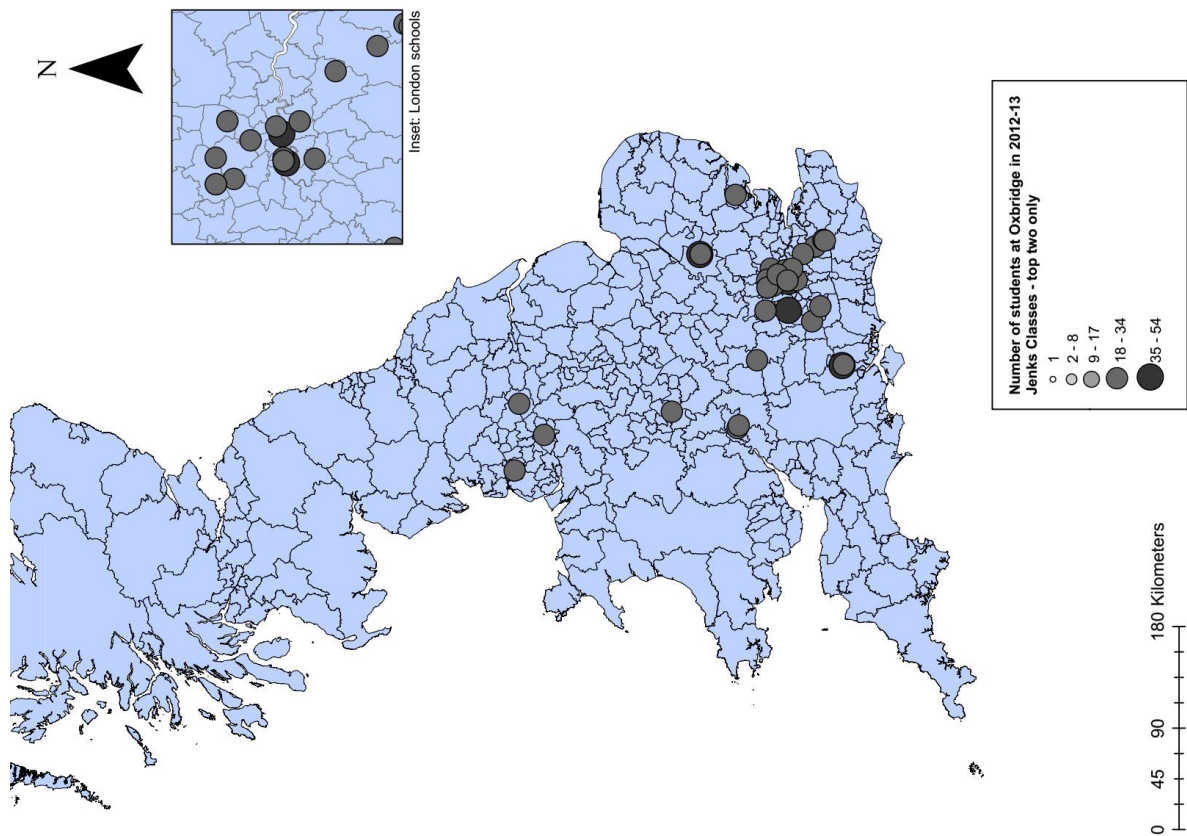


Figure 30 Map showing which schools Oxford and Cambridge recruited from and the number of students, top two Jenks classes, 2012-13

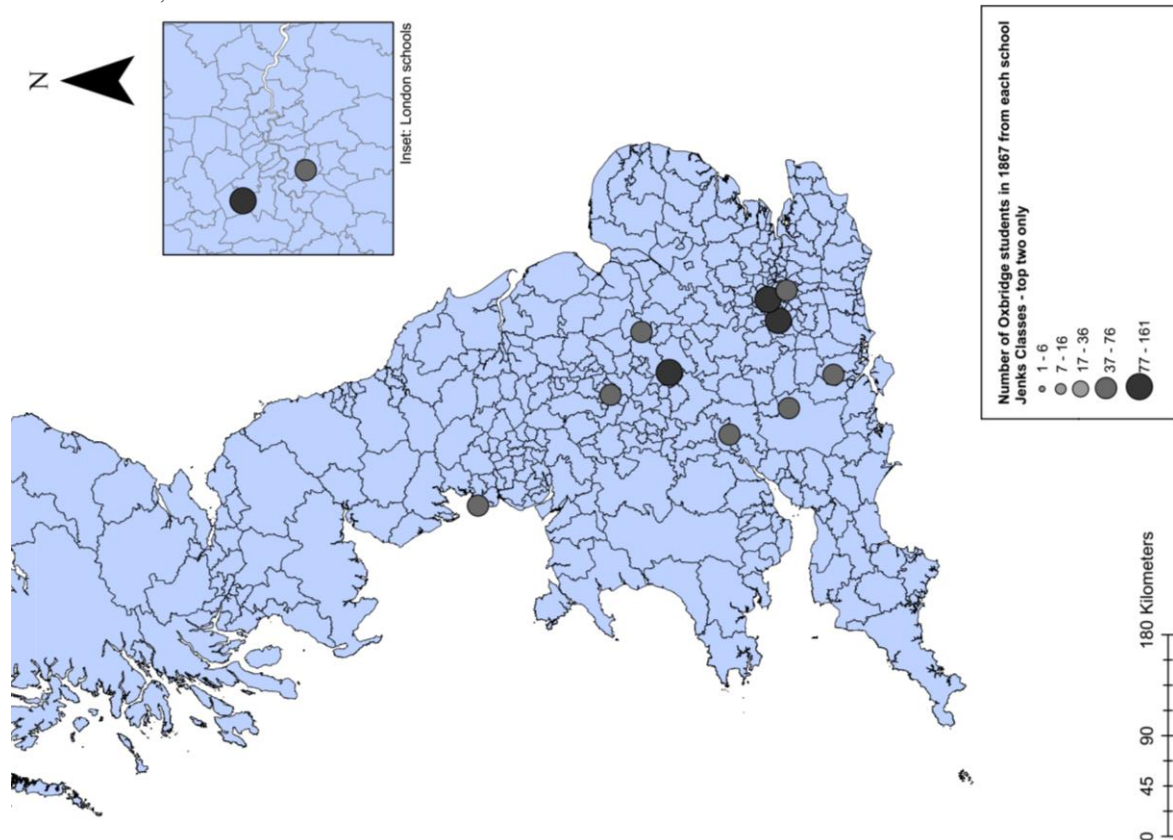


Figure 31 Map showing which schools Oxford and Cambridge recruited from and the number of students, top two Jenks classes, 1867.

Rubinstein argued that over the late nineteenth and early twentieth the dualism of the British elite and middle classes became more entrenched, with the wealthier and more Anglican metropolitan and south-eastern group divided economically and culturally from the dissenting, less affluent and industrial middle classes. This had educational implications with Rubinstein (1977a: 621) arguing that this was key to underpinning an educational bifurcation within the geography of the middle class, with the Northern group far less disposed culturally or economically towards the public school system, concentrated on the South East, and Oxbridge. However, he did not provide any real evidence for this claim as Anderson (1995: 31) noted, but it is in fact possible to examine this claim using data drawn from the Clarendon Report appendices (162-167).

What we can see from comparing the two sets of maps is the depth of change within both the school and the HE systems since the 1860s. The substantial increase in the number of schools that Oxford and Cambridge now recruit from, is a testament to the dramatic educational expansion which has occurred over the past hundred and sixty years. The variation in the number of students that are recruited from each school has also been substantially reduced. No longer do Eton, Rugby and Harrow send over 100 students each to Oxford's dreamy spires and the banks of the Cam. Furthermore, it is only Eton that remains at the very apex of the educational hierarchy in terms of Oxbridge acceptances, second only to Westminster in 2012-13, which moved up from 18th in terms of Oxbridge places in 1867 to first in 2012. Moreover, there are three highly successful and academic sixth form colleges⁹³ within the top seven institutions in absolute, numeric terms. Of the other state schools in the top two junks classes in 2012-13 (33 schools in all), nine are selective grammar schools and a further two are large FE or sixth form colleges, bringing the total to 14 state schools and 19 independents. Amongst the private schools, King's College School, Winchester, St Paul's, Highgate, Tonbridge and the Manchester Grammar School have all effectively held their position with the others being new arrivals, the product of the expansion and systematisation of the public school sector which followed the Clarendon and Taunton reports (Leinster-Mackay, 1981; Simon, 1987).⁹⁴ In an institutional sense then we can see that the Oxbridge-public school nexus has not been entirely static since the late 19th century.

⁹³ Hills Sixth Form College, Cambridge, Peter Symonds College, Winchester and The Sixth Form College Farnborough, all three of which were successor institutions to grammar schools and indicated how the radical hopes for sixth form colleges by Pedley (1977) and others were partially misguided, with some of these colleges operating with heavily academic, selective practices with substantial internal differentiation of tracks for different students.

⁹⁴ In this sense, using data from the Clarendon report of 1868 is too early to gauge effectively the persistence of position amongst schools. A better source and one which I will be looking into in the future is the Bryce Commission which has a statistical appendix which may provide similar data from the 1890s.

There has been an 'opening-up' to new institutional conduits, though largely this has been to new or reformed private schools with the elite state conduits being selective grammars, further education or sixth form colleges which descended from local grammars (and successfully retained their local academic prestige and symbolic position within the local field).

Geographically however, the persistence of the southern bias of elite Oxbridge feeder schools is quite clear. In fact if anything, the concentration of elite schools on London seems to have become more entrenched with 12 of the institutions in the top two Jenks classes (Figure 30) situated in London and a further 10 in the South East with only four of the total outside of the South East (two in the North-West, one in Yorkshire and one in the West Midlands). In part this domination of the South-East could perhaps be accounted for by population growth but this clearly does not account for the scale of this geographical bias and the complete absence of *any* institutions in Cumbria and the North East. The burgeoning growth of this elite infrastructure of metropolitan reproduction in the intervening century and a half since the 1867 data, arguably forms part of the much deeper de-coupling of London and the South-East from the rest of the country, both economically and culturally. As H. J. Dyos argued in his presciently entitled article, 'Greater and Greater London':

The big towns of England, the French writer Cohen-Portheim once suggested in a revealing little book, *England, the Unknown Isle* (1930), are really no more than colonial towns. 'The word "province" in its continental sense is unknown in England,' he wrote, 'nor is there any reality to which it would correspond.' As to London, it remained unique, 'a formation for which no name exists'. The capital has remained where it was planted when the exchequer was settled there under Henry II and the common bench added soon after. Had the campaigns against Scotland under the early Edwards come off, as Tout suggested, the capital might have settled at York, but given that failure and the wealth of London it was natural that it should have remained in the south, and become the national accumulator.

(Dyos, 1971: 54)

London's position as the 'national accumulator' began to become more acute in the late 19th century (Robson, 1986) and has exploded since the late 1980s and since the 2008-09 crisis (Massey, 2007; Hutton and Lee, 2012). The pseudo-colonial relationship between the North of England, still acutely felt today (Griffiths, 2016), and the dominant South-East region, has long involved the, largely south-eastern, public schools as the institutions fostering this

linguistic, cultural and economic hegemony (Windle, 2011), and their position as dominant institutions within the field of schooling remains. However, this geographical constellation of elite secondary and post-16 institutions is now more subtle and functions alongside a broader field of institutional types. The rise of academically selective forms of state provision which rival the private sector in absolute, not relative (i.e. percentage of cohort), terms for places at Oxbridge has not really shifted the geography of elite institutions which was already present in the 1860s in a nascent and less extreme form. These schools and colleges serve as central conduit nodes in circuits of power which extend from schools and colleges, to elite universities and beyond into the core concentrations of economic, cultural and political power which are now even more concentrated in the South-East. The 'metropolitan vortex' is not only supported by the golden triangle of elite universities (Cunningham and Savage, 2015; Wakeling and Savage, 2015b), but by a prior incubating stage and it is this stage which forms the focus of this thesis.

Appendix C – Regional trends in private schools recruitment of international students 2010-15

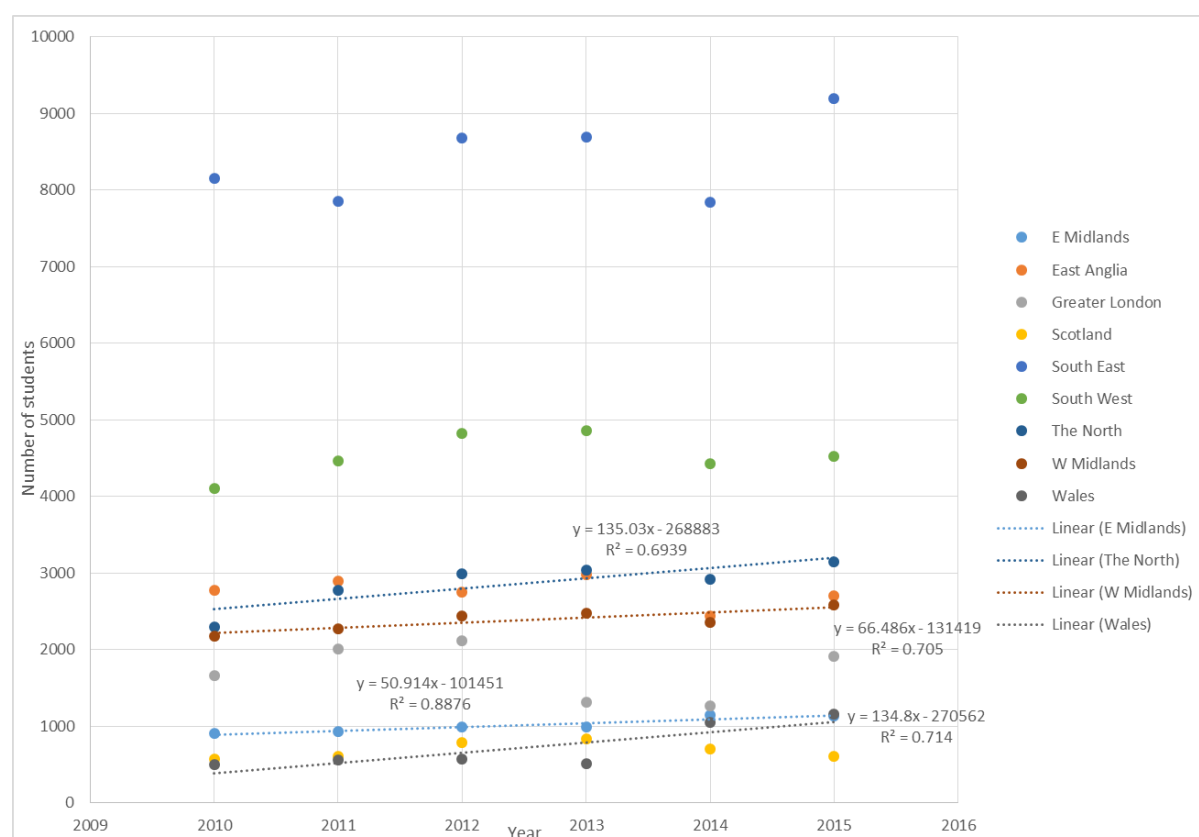
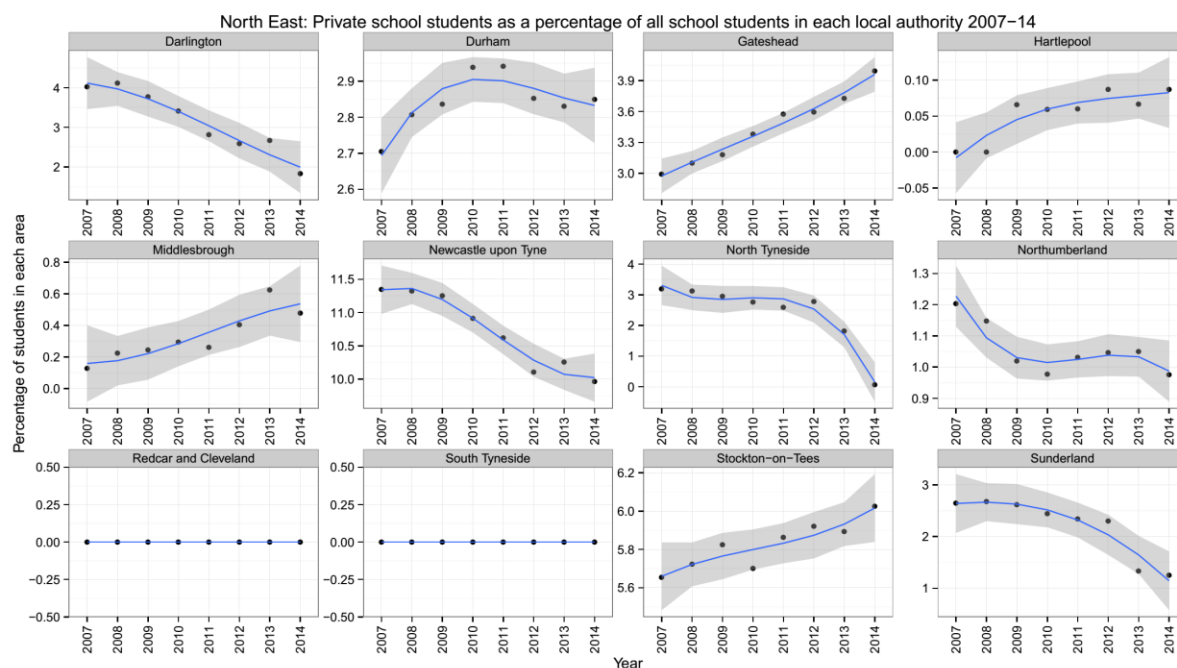
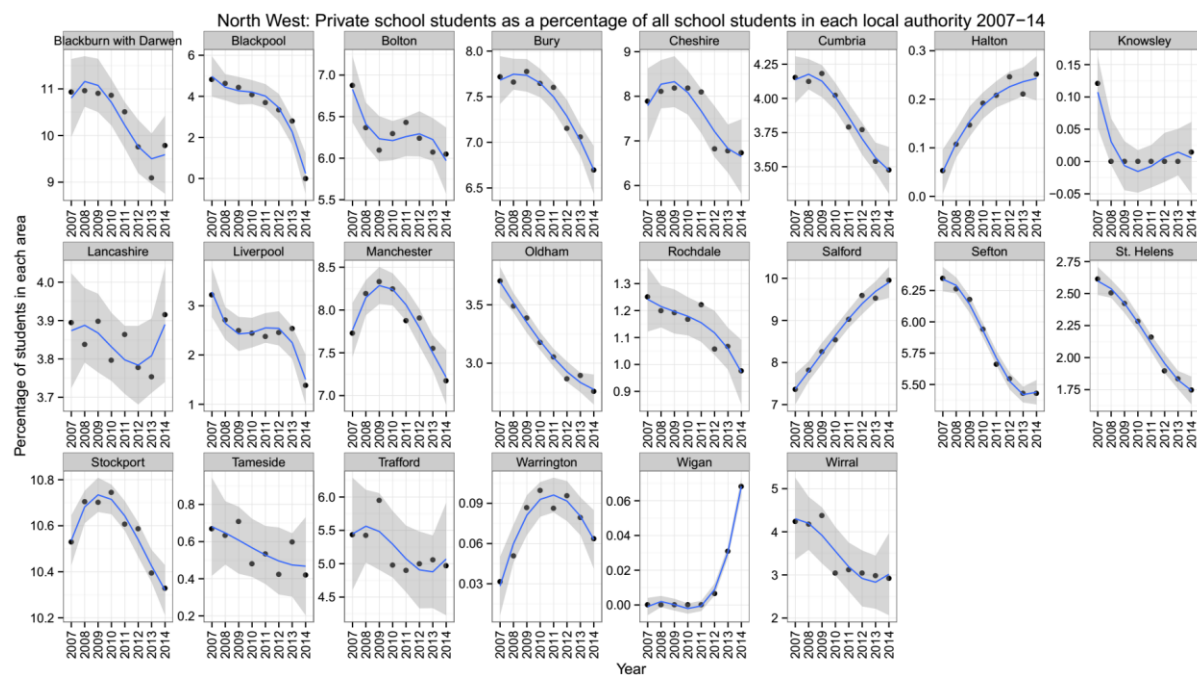


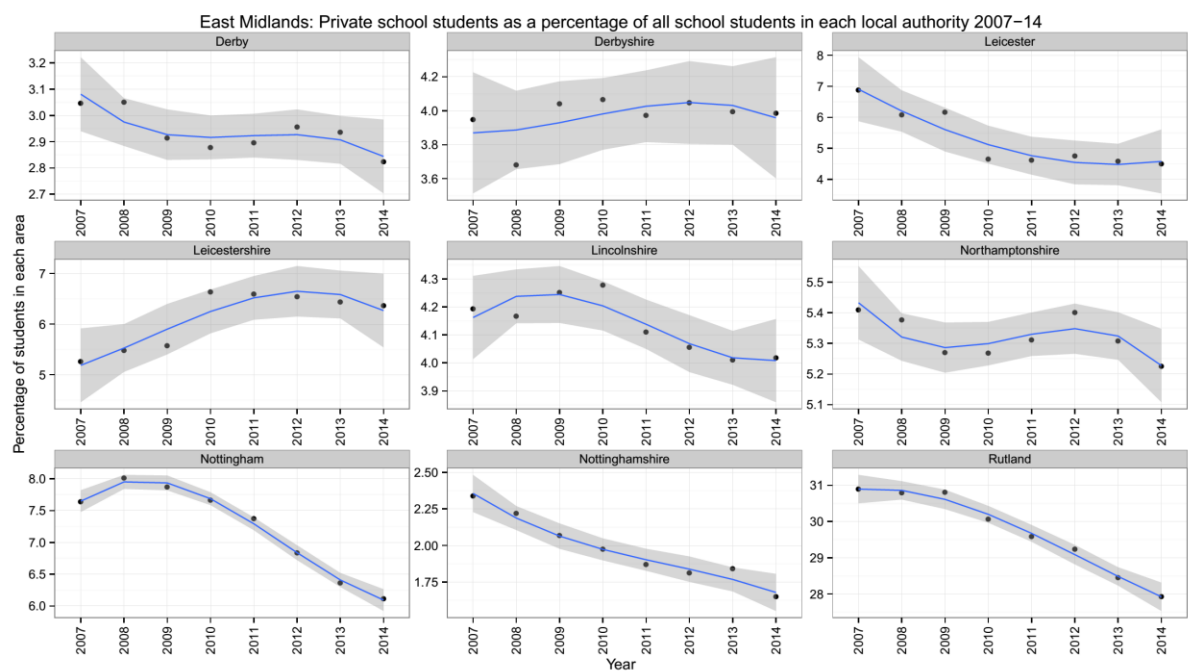
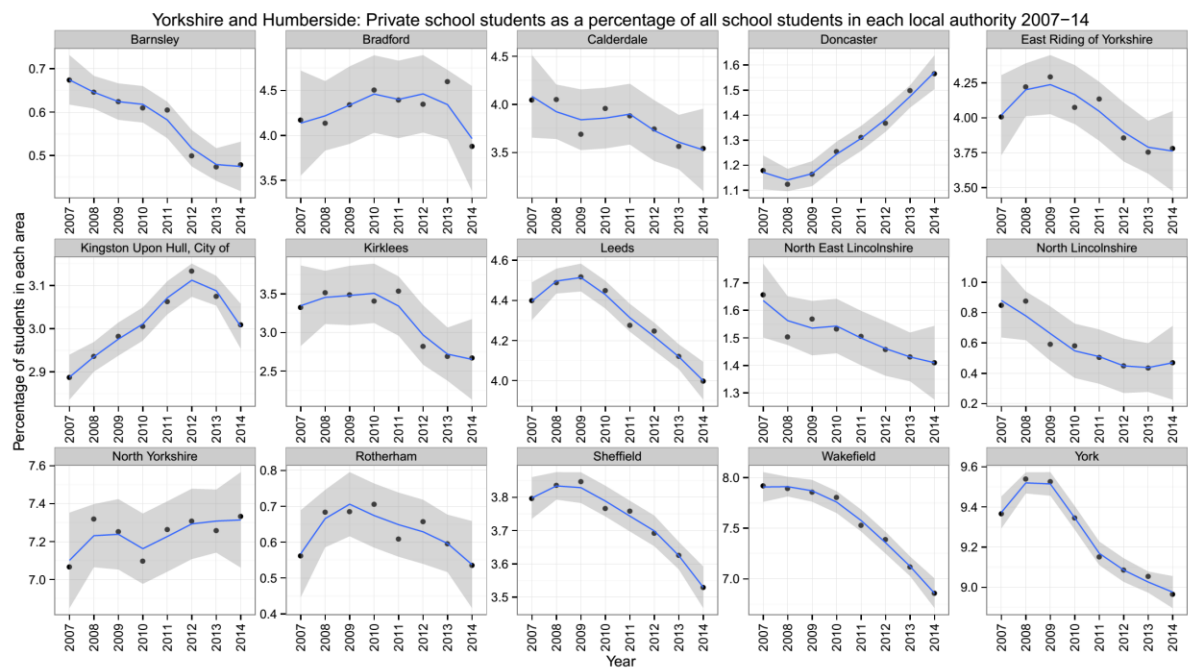
Figure 32 Graph showing number of international students in independent schools by region 2010-2015. Data: Independent Schools' Council (2015).

Commentary:

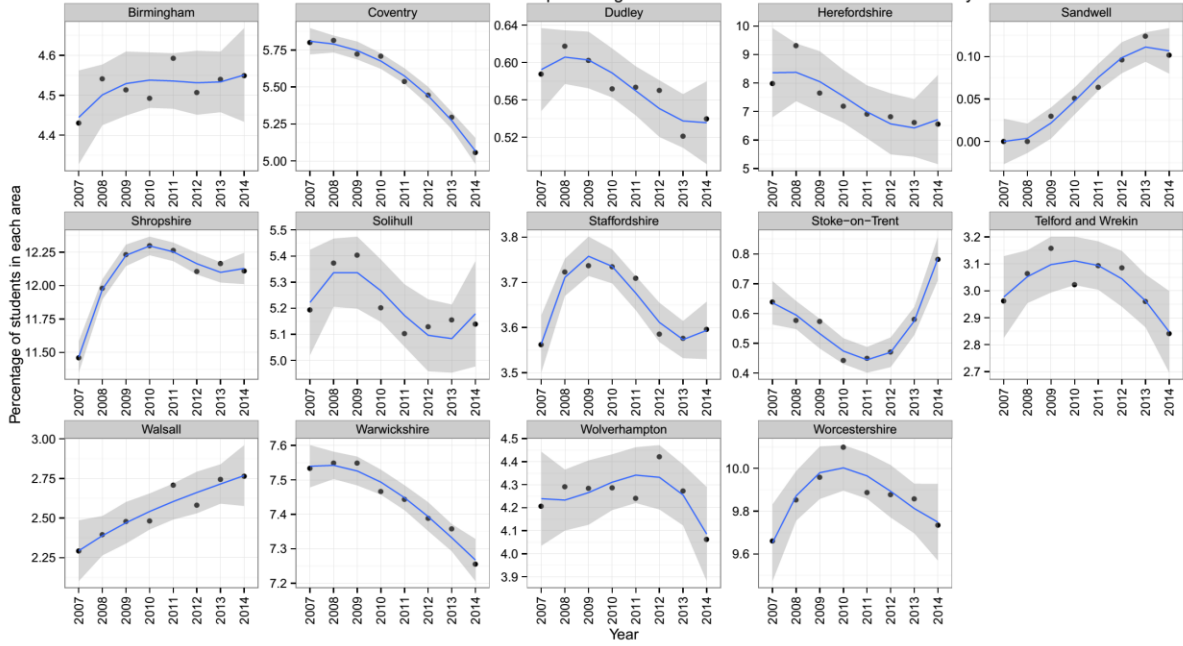
Linear regression lines of best fit have been added to show how growth of international students has been strongest in provincial regions outside of the South of England. Trend lines have been added only for those regions with a high R^2 (the next strongest r squared is the South East, $R^2=0.26$), the fact that these regions (East and West Midlands, Wales and 'The North' – Yorkshire, the North-West and the North East are combined by the ISC) and have also seen notable declines in private school participation implies that one survival strategy has been to recruit more international students with the significant boarding incomes they often bring with them.

Appendix D – Regional trends in private school participation at local authority level 2007-2014

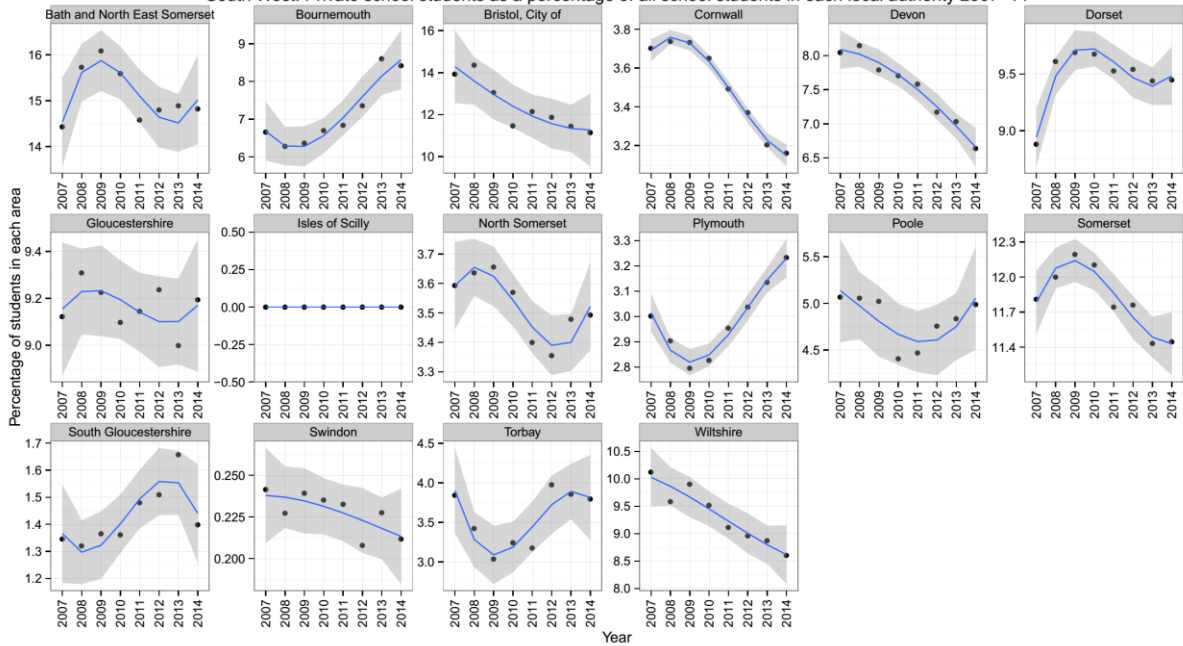


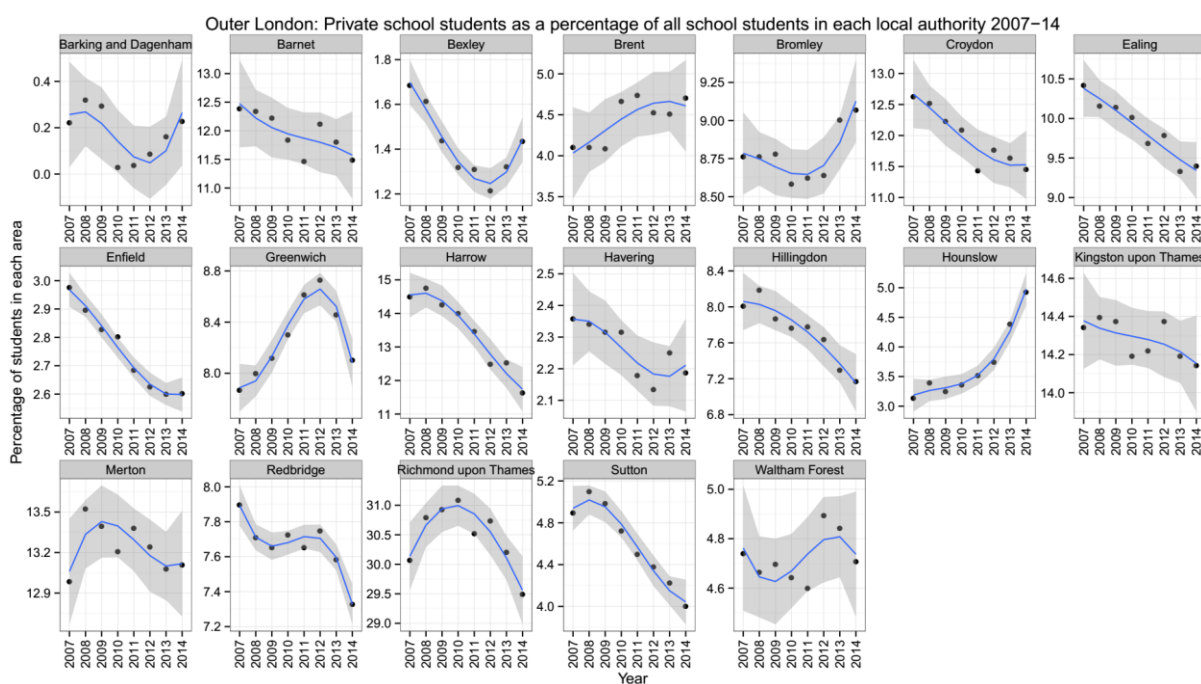
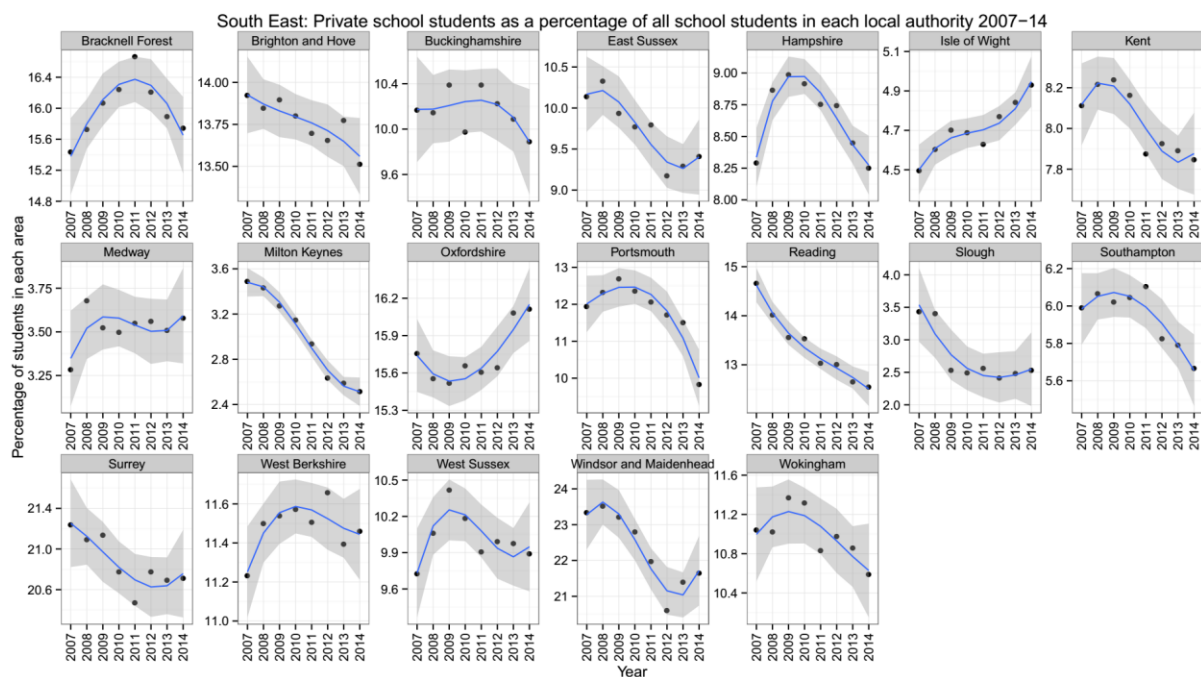


West Midlands: Private school students as a percentage of all school students in each local authority 2007–14

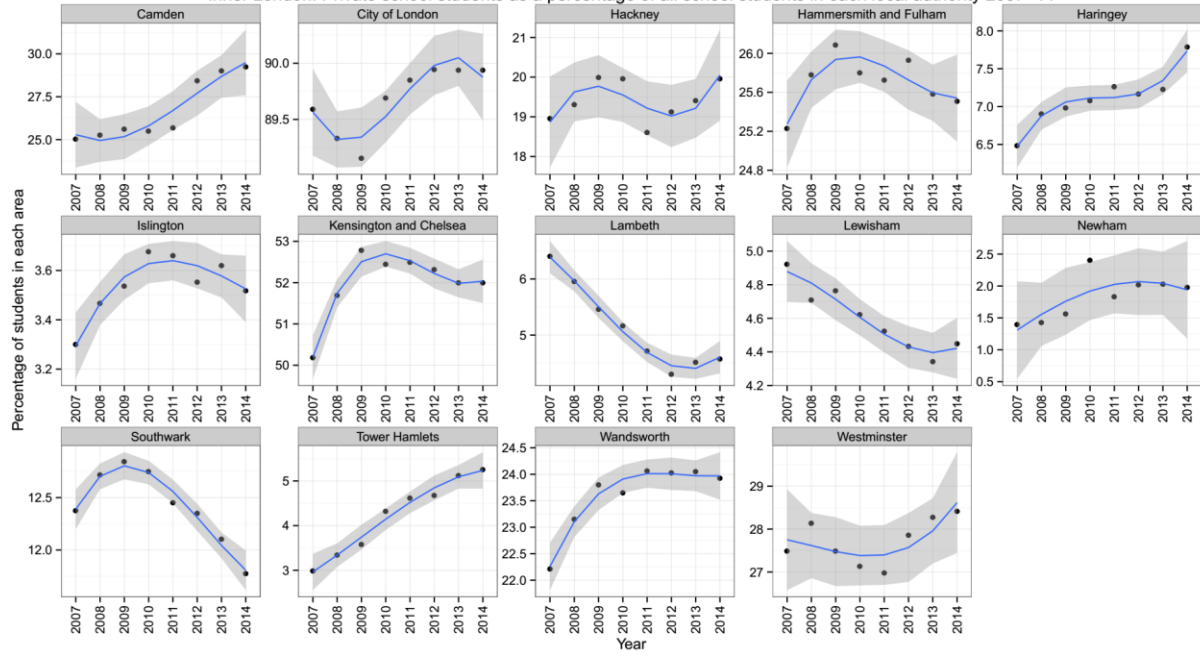


South West: Private school students as a percentage of all school students in each local authority 2007–14





Inner London: Private school students as a percentage of all school students in each local authority 2007–14



Appendix E – Maps of Oxbridge participation (private schools only)

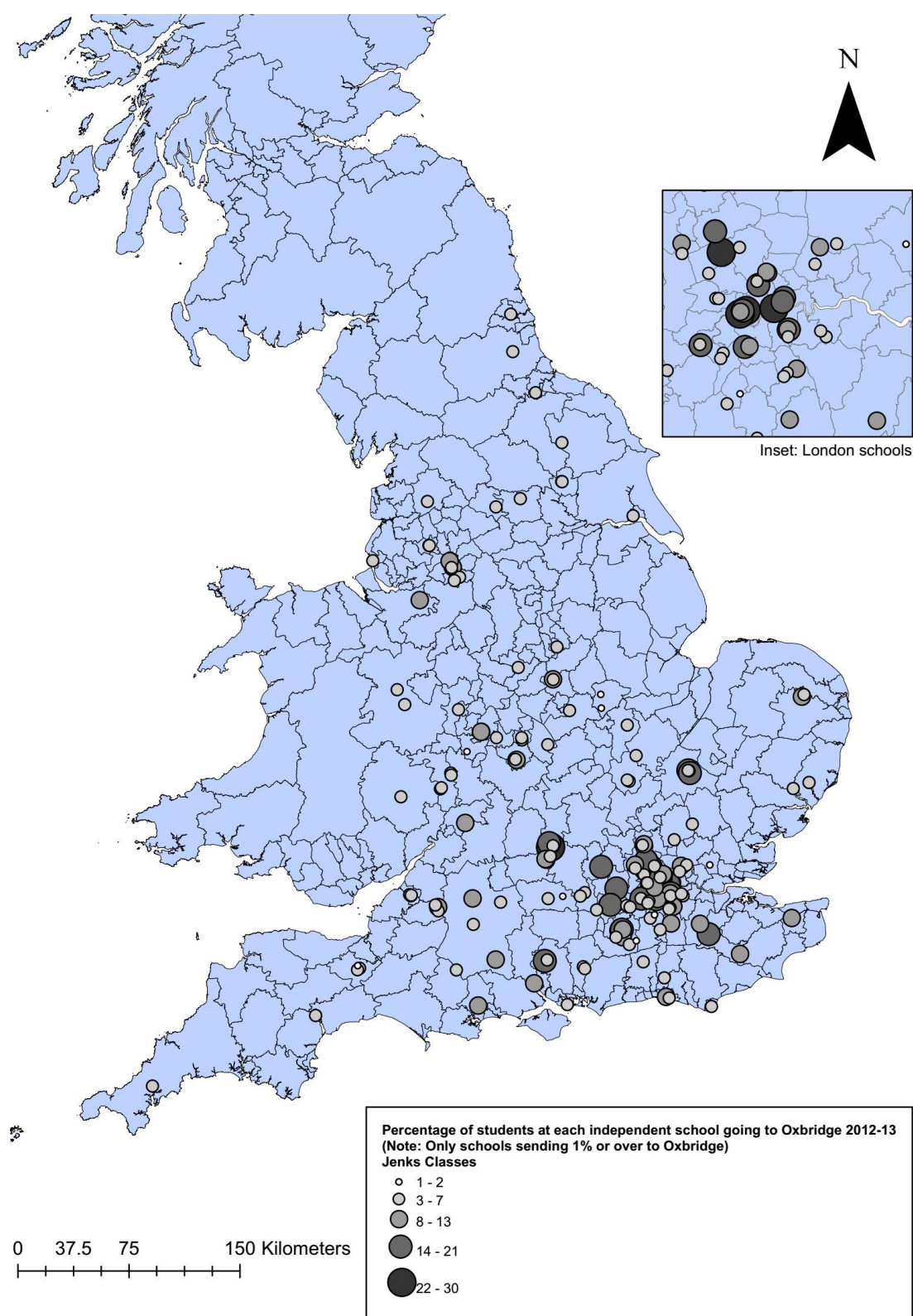


Figure 33 All independent schools sending one per cent or more of their students to Oxford and/or Cambridge 2012-13

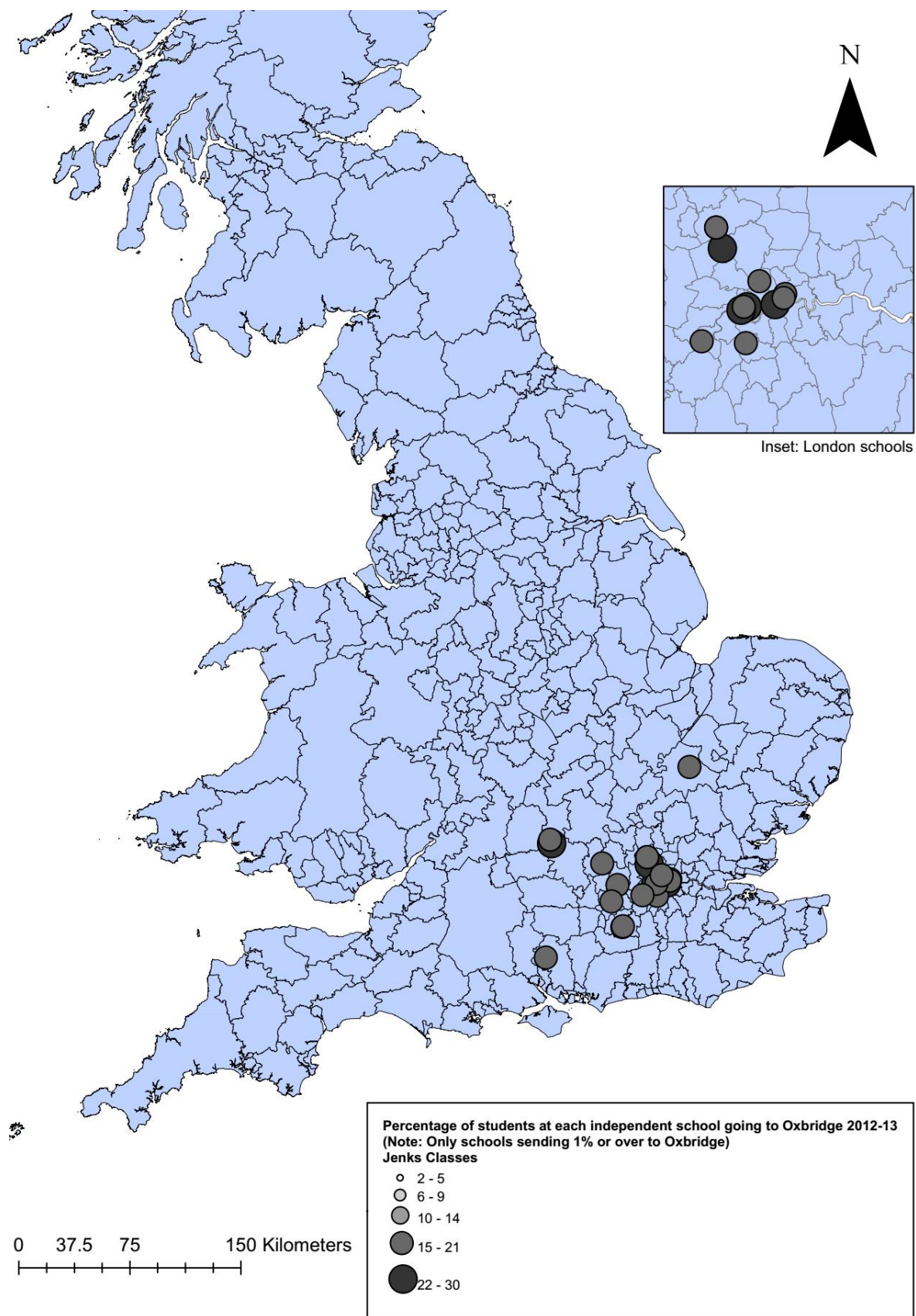


Figure 34 All independent schools sending one per cent or more of their students to Oxford and/or Cambridge 2012-13, top two jenks classes

Appendix F – Late nineteenth century geographies of class and schooling and the creation of a ‘national’ model of elite education

Bryce (1868: 585, 589) in his report for the Taunton Commission on Secondary Education of 1868, described Rossall, an Anglican boys boarding school, as ‘the only representative in the county of what is vulgarly called the “public school” system’ and ‘the only school of its class in the north of England’. Both Bryce (1868: 536, 720), who reported on Lancashire and Fitch (1868: 147-148), who reported on the Ridings of Yorkshire, described how the wealthiest of the Mancunian ‘mercantile’ classes and the ‘plutocracy’ of ‘new’, presumably industrial, Yorkshire men preferred to send their boys away to school, with the result that few sons of the local elite were educated in the Northern counties. Fitch’s point in regard to the local class structure and the preferences of the local elite for a particular form of schooling are worth quoting at some length:

And year by year, class distinctions are becoming more and more strongly marked. It is not only the distance which divides the poor from the rich, which is daily increased, but each stratum of society seems to cleave off from those above and below it more readily than of old. In the rural districts of Craven where the “statesmen” or small freeholders retain their primitive habits, there is less difficulty on social grounds. The son of the landholder works in school side by side with the child of the labourer without any sense of degradation.

But in the great towns and their vicinity the divisions of classes are far more strongly marked. Here the factory operatives form a class socially quite distinct from all above them, then come the retail tradesman and the clerk, then the small manufacturer and professional man, and then the highest class,— not an aristocracy, it is true, but a plutocracy consisting of men of enormous wealth, who consort with the members of the higher professions, and who, conscious of the newness of their origin, are restlessly eager to reach after alliances with the landed gentry, with parliament, with the magistracy, or, in short, with something in the world which possesses traditions and a prospect of permanence.

Throughout the West Riding, the children belonging to this last class, as well as those of the richer gentry, are habitually sent to distant schools. Locomotion is now so easy, that practically, Rugby or Westminster is as accessible to the son of a Yorkshire squire, as Leeds or York. In fact, the more distant place of education seems to be invariably preferred. It is the object of the father, as a rule, to withdraw his son from local associations, and to take him as far as possible from the sons of his own neighbours and dependants. The children of the landed and moneyed aristocracy may therefore be completely left out of view, so far as this local inquiry is concerned, for they are with few exceptions educated out of the county.

(Fitch, 1868: 147-148)

Fitch paints a picture of substantial change in the nature of the class structure which having a clear effect on the types of schooling different strata are opting for. There is also something distinctively urban about these processes, with class relations *in Rure* apparently changing more slowly with the result that endowed secondary schools (the object of the Taunton inquiry) retained a mix of classes. Most interesting however for our purposes here is the remarks on the use of the railways by local plutocratic elites, aspiring to cultural and political 'alliances' with older gentlemanly elites and institutions, to educate their sons away from home. This is a particularly interesting aspect of the public school model which would only begin to decline after 1945 and especially from the 1960s when parental expectations of, and capacity to afford, boarding began to change (Rae, 1981: 143-145). The move away from boarding and its preservation at only the wealthiest and more elite schools represents a significant shift in upper-middle-class patterns of social reproduction which deserves greater attention.

In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, however these elite boarding schools were not linked to their locality, reflecting a how a particular mode of class formation through education was beginning to become established. This reflected the development of received pronunciation and its association with elite public schools of the South-East (Honey, 1977: 234), but the model that was being developed aimed to be national and 'above' links to any particular locality or region:

Although Rossall is the only school of its class in the north of England, and is easily accessible by railway from Manchester, Liverpool, and the manufacturing towns, its connexion, or as the French say, its "clientship", is by no means exclusively or even chiefly in Lancashire. A great many boys come to it from the Midland counties, from Ireland, even from the west and south of England. When a Lancashire merchant or manufacturer sends his sons from home, he desires as often as not to send them a long way off, partly that they may lose their northern tongue, partly that they may form new acquaintances, and be quite away from home influences. Hence, conspicuous as is the place which Rossall holds in Lancashire, there is nothing characteristic of Lancashire about its system, nor does it exert any more direct influence upon the county than is exerted by Rugby, Harrow, or Cheltenham.

(Bryce, 1868: 589)

Rossall was not simply 'the only school of its class in the north of England', its model of schooling and its geographical mode of recruitment were largely detached from Lancashire, although regional accents were certainly present at the school itself (Honey, 1977: 234).

Moreover, according to Bryce this is similar to the relationship between school and locality at the other major boys' boarding schools of the mid-late nineteenth century. This suggestive analysis is crucial in understanding what the geography of educational power actually means both historically and in the current context; a distinctive form of elite educational culture was being produced which was intended to be *a-spatial* but by virtue of its association with south-eastern elites and the professional middle classes of the capital, it always retained a distinctive geography within England and Britain.

What was being created through the reformed Universities and public school system of the late 19th century was an elite, white and almost exclusively male *national* culture, in which the British middle class could also gain social prestige. These reforms were 'consciously intended to produce a public service bourgeoisie, or urban gentry, a new stratum of men blending elements of the aristocracy and the upper middle class' (Anderson, 2006: 52-53). The dominant 'gentlemanly' 'cultural ideal' of the English/British imperial elite was in Dodd's (2014: 31) words, 'sited in certain institutions which underwent transformation, served "national" not local needs, gained authority to define themselves and others and inculcated appropriate (male) behaviour defining its function in and to the national culture.' In this light the geography of public schools and elite educational culture was not something that was distinctive to the South-East by intention, it was intended that this elite educational culture would be nationally (and imperially) spread across the country and beyond, but this was the culture of a distinctive, dominant set of class fractions concentrated on the South-East of England. In the North of England, these schools were always more sparsely distributed, reflecting, in the late 19th century, the distinctive provincial, religious and industrial cultures of the northern middle and working class.⁹⁵ There are no formal differences in the content or institutional forms of education at a regional level in England, but this elite educational culture is a regional one.

Now, in the early 21st century, these provincial outposts and elite feeder schools to Oxbridge are just as rare but they are also more financially vulnerable (See section 4.2). The power of

⁹⁵ It ought to be noted that there were alternative educational institutions of the mid-late 19th century strongly, but certainly not exclusively, associated with industrial urban areas. Walker's (2013) analysis shows how the expansion of mechanical institutes was a national phenomenon of the mid to late nineteenth century and was particularly concentrated on Yorkshire, Lancashire, Glasgow and London. The legacy of these institutes is a distinctive and alternative educational infrastructure with a tradition based in adult and technical forms of education, more strongly associated with the working class; these mechanical institutes are also often the predecessors of what were the polytechnic universities, technical schools and further education colleges (Walker, 2015).

Oxbridge, however, and to a lesser extent the south-eastern public schools too, over the curriculum and what forms of education retain educational prestige is still unbridled. Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln College from 1861 argued that Oxford should be a 'National University', 'co-extensive with the nation; [...] the common source of the whole of the higher (or secondary) education for the country' (Dodd, 2014: 28). These models, practices and cultures of education have never truly been unseated (Reid and Filby, 1982), and they reflect a distinct historical geography of economic and cultural power which has, if anything, only been entrenched by the intervening century and a half.

(Geo-)Political conflicts between the metropolitan elites and provincial councils over secondary schooling and elitism

Tensions between national and local control over the content of schooling were often set within conflicts between elite-educated metropolitan civil servants and politicians and local Labour councils. In a comment which in many ways parallels local authority proposals for post-16 expansion in the 1980s, Gail Savage (1983: 271) describes this tension between the metropolitan elite, in this case Fisher, the President of the Board of Education under Lloyd George, and more progressive provincial Labour councils:

'H.A.L. Fisher (in a policy-setting minute written in response to a request from Durham for the Board of Education to authorize the raising of the proportion of free places in Durham schools to 60 per cent) spoke for them all when he commented that 'I doubt whether the Labour men who control educational policy in Durham realize the great importance of insisting upon a high standard of quality in the Secondary Education of the Country'.'

Savage carefully documents how secondary schooling in the inter-war period was influenced by the Oxbridge and public school education of the overwhelming majority of both Presidents of the Board (i.e. ministers) and the civil servants. She argues that their education was not only influential in allowing them access to the civil service but crucially was central to their framing of secondary education, which was narrowly understood along public school lines as selective, academic and leading to university. That was undoubtedly what was meant by insisting on 'a high standard of quality'. Another example of this is indicated by the 'fellow feeling' between Oxbridge dons and the Oxbridge educated civil servants of the University Grants Committee from the 1930s through to at least the 1960s (Anderson, 2006: 114).

In contrast to this elite, metropolitan conception of schooling supported by the Board of Education, some provincial councils were being far more adventurous. The expansion of free places during the interwar period had a distinctive urban provincial bias, with Bradford leading the way in completely free secondary schools (Simon, 1974a: 83). Bradford had also been the focus of trade union demands within the Labour party for a non-selective broad secondary education, which was faced down by the WEA and Tawney, who preferred to opt for a more consensual, but less radical, continuation of selection at 11 (Brooks, 1991).

Appendix G – London’s sub-regional circuits of education

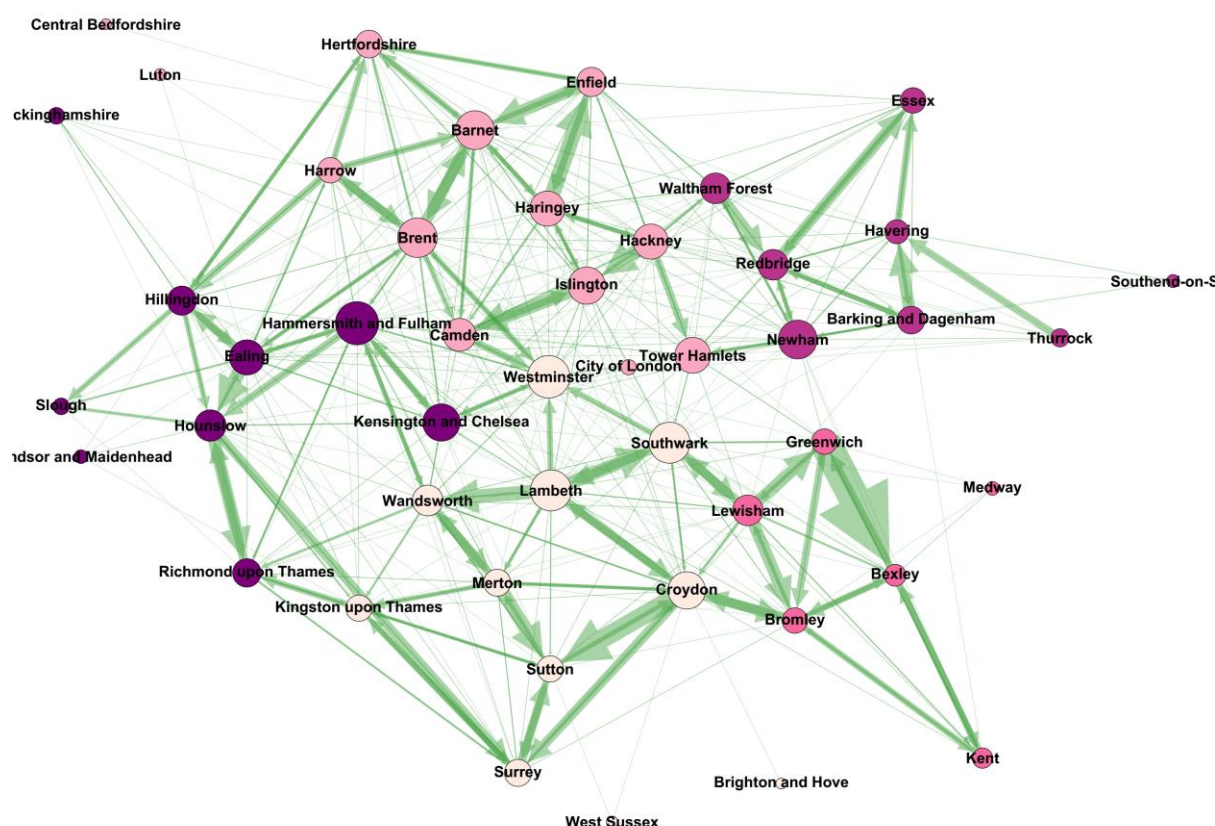


Figure 35 Modularity analysis of cross-border flows of students for secondary school 2010-11

Butler and Hamnett (2011: 179) have previously suggested that there are ‘sub-regional education markets’ in London, noting how, except for Hackney and Tower Hamlets, a single, ‘sub-regional’ education market operated across East London with the schools of Redbridge at the apex of this hierarchy. As Gewirtz *et al.* (1995) did in their original analysis of circuits of schooling, the North London sub-region is taken as the main focus of qualitative case studies included here. We can however seek to show how these educational sub-regional divisions of London boroughs might exist across London.

This modularity analysis (see section 4.3.1 p. 133) reveals how the patterns of students crossing local authority borders in order to attend secondary school suggests specific sub-regional groups of boroughs. By detecting groups of boroughs with denser links (i.e. numbers of students, represented here by the thickness of the edges) than would be expected at random, five sub-regional education markets can be distinguished. This confirms Butler and Hamnett’s (2011: 179) suggestion that Hackney and Tower Hamlets are separate from the rest of the East London boroughs, with Hackney in particular much more strongly linked to other North London boroughs. These links suggest how the educational *market* operates at a sub-regional scale, but these patterns could be described as sub-regional circuits, a term Butler and Hamnett (2011: 40) also use, simply indicating how local neighbourhood-school level circuits are patterned at a broader sub-regional geography.

Appendix H - Schools and colleges included as case studies

Woodtham Park School, North London.

25 students in four focus groups.

Established in 1999 in response to a parental campaign for a new school and agreed to by local authority. On the fringes of the well-established North London suburb of Muswell Hill which has been intensely gentrified over the last 20 years. Closer to the less affluent side of the borough of Haringey and with a more diverse intake than Fortismere School at the heart of Muswell Hill. However, this may now be changing with the opening of a new school just to the East of the school including the less affluent more mixed neighbourhood formerly part of Woodtham Park's intake. A very popular primary school, 'Blossom Hill Primary', is situated right next door to the school and has a strong white middle-class intake, most of whom attend Woodtham Park. A small sixth form but academically successful with the second highest

Valley Hills School, Sheffield.

36 students in nine focus groups.

Interview with former head of sixth form.

A former secondary modern, situated in a suburban neighbourhood within the affluent constituency of Sheffield Hallam, in the South-West of the city. One of two schools which after the city opted for full comprehensivisation opened a sixth form in the 1970s. As with the other schools in the South-West of Sheffield, Valley Hills was permitted to keep its sixth form after a 1980s conflict between Sheffield City Council and the Conservative education minister over adopting a full Further Education College model. A predominantly white middle-class intake, though with a small working-class and ethnic minority intake at 11. Large sixth form with substantial intake from across the city at 16. Lead school in a local academy chain.

King Henry's Boys Grammar School

20 students in four focus groups

Interview with assistant head

Outer London grammar school with medieval foundation. Situated in what was originally a small county market town which expanded rapidly particularly after the opening of an underground station in the 1870s. The area immediately surrounding the school is primarily an affluent white middle-class neighbourhood, but the school's intake area has grown substantially over the last 20-25 years to include British-Indian and other minority groups, often from middle-class backgrounds themselves and many of whom live in North-West London suburbs. The school became a council-run school in the 1930s as a result of the cost of re-building the school and as a result was included in the borough's comprehensivisation in the 1970s. Using the grant-maintained school status brought in in 1988 the school was able to revert to selective entry, first by interview and then in 1994 by 11+ style entry exam. The school is now hyper-selective with over 2000 students applying and an additional selection at 16 resulting in some of the highest results in the country at GCSE and A-level and a consistently high percentage of students attending Oxbridge.

Camden School for Girls

Interview with former student. Analysis of school history, NPD and website.

Established as the cheaper school to partner the North London Collegiate Girls School, which moved out of Camden in 1940. Unlike its sister school, operates under voluntary-aided status and became a comprehensive school in 1976. Its local neighbourhood of Camden/Kentish Town includes both remaining council housing with ethnically mixed, working-class tenants and very affluent North London middle class residents, categorized under Cunningham and Savage's (2015) analysis as one of the key neighbourhoods for the cultural elite. The sixth form is academically selective and the school sees a major influx from the private sector at 16.

Henrietta Barnett School

Interview with former student. Analysis of school history, NPD and website.

Established in 1911 as part of the garden suburb development in West Hampstead.

Selective and high-performing girls grammar school with small intakes of only around 80 students per year with 24 applicants per place in 2015. Intake is mixed combining local white middle-class from Hampstead and Golders' Green, some of whom with Jewish backgrounds and girls from further afield in North-West London from ethnic-minority backgrounds.

Appendix I – A discussion of terms

Elite and middle-class schooling

The public schools in England have often been labelled as elite (Cookson and Persell, 1985), but whether or not the actual intake of the schools themselves is recruited from 'elite' families is generally less clear, in large part because private schools are generally disinclined to release this data. Rubinstein's (1986: 173-174) survey of the education of over 3200 individuals in elite positions between 1860 and 1970, suggested that only Eton and to a lesser extent Harrow remained the preserve of the very wealthy, initially landowners and increasingly those from financial and business backgrounds. He argued that most of the public schools, which are generally perceived as belonging to a relatively homogeneous elite set of schools, drew on an affluent but not necessarily super-wealthy clientele including various positions within the middle classes. This is an important distinction as public schools initially gained prestige and status in the late 19th century through their capacity to *confer* status on the children of the middle classes who lacked either aristocratic title or economic capital or both (Honey, 1977: 178). What became established as an elite educational culture in the late 19th century had to be accessible to the middle classes and it is debatable whether the cultural tropes of an elite education, associated initially with the male gentlemanly ideal, were the product of the aristocracy or rather the result of middle-class aspiration (Anderson, 2007). Fast-forward to the current situation and intakes of the public schools, are largely composed of the more senior (and affluent) ranks of the professional middle classes (Delamont, 1989: 48-49), though these parents now find themselves sitting alongside the children of the international super-rich (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2015b). The key implication is that the public schools are not 'elite' merely by dint of their intake, which has long been drawn from various middle-class fractions, though how tenable this now is for all but the wealthiest of the professional occupational groups remains to be seen (Centre for Economic and Business Research, 2015). Distinguishing whether a school truly recruits from the super wealthy or is more broadly reliant on a larger professional middle-class intake is difficult, if not impossible due to a lack of accessible data, but the ambiguities highlighted here underline Rubinstein's earlier point that the role of 'elite' schools has a far broader social role than simply to educate a narrow elite. I use the term elite and middle-class schooling to reflect these ambiguities.

Using the measure of elite university attendance might provide an alternative measure of whether a school is 'elite' or not and I wish to briefly discuss this here and argue that the term elite and middle-class schooling is still the right one. Rising competition for places at elite universities and the growing importance of HE first threatened the public school hold on Oxbridge in the inter-war period. During these decades a growing numbers of students from the state-maintained/-aided grammars first began to win substantial numbers of scholarships to Oxbridge (Jenkins and Jones, 1950: 103-104). This pressure from the state grammars became more serious in the post-war period, resulting in growing academic discipline within the private schools (Rae, 1981) who have largely maintained their gross over-representation at Oxbridge. It remains the case, (see chapter four), that the private schools alongside certain 'elite' state schools remain the dominant 'feeder' schools to Oxbridge. Increasingly, however, a larger number of less prestigious state schools consistently send smaller numbers to Oxbridge. This reflects broader changes in how a different and expanded middle class has come to approach schooling differently in a much expanded and still largely comprehensive system of secondary school admissions. Using the comprehensive system, the housing market restrictions on entry at 11 and the preservation of selection at 16 has been central to this middle-class strategizing since the 1970s as I argued in chapter six. Nevertheless, there has long been a small core of elite private schools acting as *de facto* feeder schools to Oxbridge within a larger grouping of other schools (for the historical geography of this see Appendix B, p. 1) which also send significant, albeit smaller numbers of students to Oxbridge. This larger grouping of schools now includes many high-attaining state schools whose intakes are substantially more affluent than most state schools (Sutton Trust, 2006; Sutton Trust, 2013). The tension here is between schools that are nationally dominant in sending very large numbers of students to Oxbridge and those which send smaller numbers of students to Oxbridge despite often being considered as 'elite' or dominant at a local level. In this latter group of schools, Oxbridge places are an indicator of local prestige but in material terms it is always a small minority of students within each school that win these places: these circuits are contingent and narrow. In contrast for the nationally elite cadre of Oxbridge feeder schools, these circuits are well-established and well-trodden; these schools do not share provide access to elite universities for just a small minority of students – reproducing access to elite universities is fundamental to their expectations and how they work. Both sets of schools share in a particular model of the elite academic sixth form (Reid and Filby, 1982), but they do so from very different positions within the sub-field of elite and middle-class schooling. For these reasons over this thesis I have tended to refer to elite and middle-class schools together to refer to a broader grouping of schools which are frequently deemed 'acceptable' by the middle classes whilst also sharing an academic focus on A-levels, so-called 'hard' subjects and entry to elite

universities. There are, as we have seen, academically dominant and dominated positions within the spatial field of elite and middle-class schooling at the point of HE choice, though these schools are dominant relative to most schools and colleges in the post-16 phase.

Conceptualising class and pushing the boundaries of class analysis in education

Whilst the importance of middle-class fractions and the role of a metropolitan elite is central to this thesis, implementing a more subtle theoretical understanding of the middle class along the lines suggested by the GBCS was not possible. To begin with, distinguishing between the elite and the 'established' or 'technical' middle class was not really possible within this thesis. Interviewing students as opposed to parents allowed an understanding of the experience of moving through particular institutions within complex urban and educational hierarchies, but it made discussions of class more complex. A short questionnaire including questions on class, parental occupation and parental education could not produce the same subtlety in analysis of cultural, social or economic capital; the actual content of interviews and focus groups often providing a clearer guide to class background and how this shaped their educational experience. This is more in line with Ball's (2003: 175-177) call for an analysis of the middle class on the basis of class practices, an understanding of class through everyday experience. Alongside this emphasis of class practices within the qualitative material, I also used the NPD records, which, for students who attended university, also includes the NS-SEC background of their parents. These data illuminate class practices of selection within schooling, particularly at the key transition point of entry to sixth form. Thus, I do not see the combination of the different conceptions of class as problematic but rather as generative of a deeper understanding of how classed processes operate within different urban schools.

Using the NS-SEC, again asks questions of how this fits with acknowledging the validity of the GBCS analysis and with an emphasis of middle-class class fractions. The NS-SEC data released in the NPD only goes down to the seven or eight class break-down. Distinctions between the managerial (NS-SEC 1.1) and professional middle class (NS-SEC 1.2) are not possible. Using the NS-SEC is, as Payne (2013: 14-15) points out, still far easier to operationalise in empirical research than the GBCS. To follow through with Payne's argument though, the GBCS undoubtedly touches on changes within the class structure that have been occurring. If there was a schema that allowed me to access whether students

were drawn from elite, established middle-class or technical middle-class backgrounds I certainly would have opted for this. Taking the pragmatic path however, means relying on distinctions which refer directly to the Goldthorpe-inspired NS-SEC schema (Rose et al., 2005) in discussing data drawn from the NPD. Whilst I do still refer to the elite throughout this thesis the emphasis at the case study level is largely on *local* distinctions within the middle class, extending the analysis of the geography of class fractions and their specific engagements in the school system (Ball and Vincent, 2007; Butler and Hamnett, 2011).

This spatial analysis of the middle-class engagement in schooling at the local, neighbourhood, provincial-metropolitan city and the regional scales speaks also contributes to the extended literature surrounding the GBCS and asks additional historical questions of our conception of class. The analysis of the cost of buying housing in sought-after school catchments in chapter five flags how the distinctions between the lower-paid professional occupations, specifically nurses and teachers, and the higher-professional occupations is perhaps starker in London than in Sheffield. Whilst this analysis needs further work, it suggests that the old distinction between the upper- and lower-middle class remains key to understanding the new geography of class. This could also be seen as indicative of a new and growing divide between the new metropolitan elite and the lower-paid middle-class professionals, it certainly fits with both the suggested geography of the GBCS elite at macro and micro-scales (the neighbourhood in the London house-price analysis is a centre for the cultural elite) and the finding that the income of NS-SEC 1 is pulling away from NS-SEC 2 (Savage, 2015a: 230-231). The analysis of the geodemographic intake data for private schools, alongside the analysis of private/free school conversions, further suggests substantial dualisms within the middle class in the South-East of the country and elsewhere. The success and stability of independent schools in the South-East viewed in the light of Rubinstein's tentative suggestion that the economic and cultural dualisms of the middle class in the late 19th century were also replicated in their attitudes to the public schools and Oxbridge asks additional questions of our understanding of class. Crucially it seems to beg the question of how we should view the resurgence of a metropolitan elite historically.

The rise of the 'super-manager' is returning levels of income inequality in the UK to levels not seen since the late 19th/early 20th century (Piketty, 2014: 315-316) and Rubinstein's (1987b) analysis strongly suggests that this income inequality had a distinctive south-eastern bias. Work in the early 1990s (Thrift, 1990; Savage et al., 1995) would seem to confirm the continuing south-eastern skew to the managerial elite with their ties to London's financial sector creating a underpinning the specificities of London's class structure. A recent special issue (Moeller and Tarlau, 2016) describing the potential of Piketty's work for a political

economy, did not really look into these historical implications. The public school system which established so much of the fundamental patterning of elite and middle-class schooling in Britain was a key product of this period. The Clarendon, Taunton and Newcastle Commissions provided an intentionally precise analysis of class and schooling, moreover they explicitly set out to enforce class division within schooling. Bolstering the elite and middle-class secondary schools at the top of a re-shaped educational hierarchy was central to this project. From the outset, as is visible from the map of Oxbridge acceptances in 1867 (p. 263, this elite and middle-class educational system had a distinctive geography. If we are returning to similar levels of inequality, we should be aware of how schooling may come to reflect these patterns of class formation and class-segregated schooling.

To some extent the free school conversions already indicate the possible path a new state-led re-orientation of schooling. They suggest a distinctive spatialized, class logic of state intervention to prop-up forms of elite and middle-class schooling in areas where the middle class is too small or financially weak to support private schools. We might also look to understand the response of stronger elite educational institutions to shifts in the class structure in the particular modalities of power and economic organisation of society.⁹⁶ That is not to say that the mechanisms between income inequality, changes in the class structure and the state reform of education are straight-forward either historically in the late 19th century or now. Similarly that is not to over-look the huge quantity of literature that has been written outlining the new forms market-oriented schooling that have developed since the 1980s (Ball, 1990; Le Grand, 1991; Gewirtz et al., 1995; Whitty, 1997; Lipman, 2013). But in moving towards a spatialized historical sociology of educational power, we might need to think about how geographies of class relations and class structures work at a different scale. Beyond the local-level analysis of class and schooling we need to think about how, in a Bourdieusian sense, structural educational histories (Bourdieu and De Saint Martin, 1996) of institutional change have a distinct geography and must be combined with a 'structural analysis' (Massey, 1995: 117) of how particular class relations and structures are produced by a particular political economy of regional division. This means thinking about class and education across multiple spatial scales – from the local to the city to the region, as well as through time. Clearly, this ambitious project entails pushing at the boundaries of class analysis in relation to education, but it also allows us to push a spatial and historical analysis

⁹⁶ I am thinking for example of the malleability of elite institutions such as Oxbridge in shifting from the cosy relations with the University Grants Commission of the 1960s, to fostering close relations with the new elites that arose in the 1980s. The creation of the 'Rupert Murdoch Chair in Language and Communication' at the University of Oxford with an endowment of £3 million, sponsorship which continues to this day despite phone-hacking scandals of 2011, shows the flexibility of elite institutions to the rise of new cultural elites and their willingness to except elite financial sponsorship.

of class and schooling into other fields, in particular positioning education as constitutive of regional division and a key element in an understanding of urban and regional political economy.

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